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ABSTRACT

This book is part of a series of case studies that present better ways to educate Ohio's students. The case study is part of the Transforming Learning Communities (TLC) Project, designed to support significant school-reform efforts among Ohio's elementary, middle, and high schools. The text describes the transformation of a small high school in the rural, southeastern corner of Ohio. The book outlines a history of problems at the school and gives examples of changes arising from desperation. It then discusses the systematic reforms that were initiated at the school over a 7-year period, reforms that included plan development, staff development, changing school structures, involving students and the community, and the consolidation of change. The text focuses on the elements of a democratic learning community and demonstrates the importance of involving teachers in shared decision making, in team teaching, and in team-planning sessions. It also describes the need to include students in the democratic learning community and their role in directing their own education. Suggestions for marshaling resources for democratic change and for the institutionalization and renewal of the democratic learning community are provided. Five appendices provide information on methodology, the change timeline, coalitions, and graduation portfolio requirements. (RJM)

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Creating a Democratic Learning Community

The Case Study of Federal Hocking High School

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TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

CREATING A DEMOCRATIC LEARNING COMMUNITY:

THE CASE STUDY OF FEDERAL HOCKING HIGH SCHOOL

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Ohio Department of Education
Columbus, Ohio
1999

Dear Readers:

The 12 Transforming Learning Communities case studies enlighten readers about the search for better ways to educate Ohio's young people. The stories, told by educators themselves, paint a realistic picture of schools in Ohio.

The unique and inspirational perspectives of the school people highlight the triumphs of team spirit, the drive to turn obstacles into opportunities, and the effort to consider complex questions and find answers that lead to higher student achievement. These researchers tell stories of success and frustration in the endeavor to make life better for future generations.

At the core of educational change is a long-term commitment to teaching and learning that has the potential for creating positive change throughout society. The case studies emphasize intense, high-quality professional development; increased service to others; a holistic approach to education; the promotion of a sense of community; and a deepened understanding of the daily work in the classrooms, corridors, and boardrooms of public schools.

The educators at the heart of change encourage us to examine and refresh our views about schools. Sincere thanks is extended to the local educators, university researchers, and concerned citizens for their willingness to examine the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of change.

Sincerely,

Linda C. Nusbaum

Linda C. Nusbaum
Research Project Manager

Transforming Learning Communities Project

INTRODUCTION

The Transforming Learning Communities (TLC) Project was an initiative funded by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to support significant school reform efforts among Ohio's elementary, middle, and high schools. Education researchers associated with the International Centre for Educational Change at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto were contracted to undertake in-depth case studies of school improvement in a select number of schools supported by Ohio's Venture Capital grants. The aim was to understand the school improvement efforts in these schools, and to engage other Ohio educators in the lessons learned from these schools' experiences.

The project title communicates the orientation to the study. "Learning communities" is a metaphor for schools as learning places for everyone (especially students and teachers) who has a stake in the success of schools as educational environments. "Transforming" signifies that the schools are in a process of change, and that the changes they are striving to achieve involve fundamental reforms in teaching and learning, assessment, organization, professional development, and/or governance. Transforming also captures the intent of the project to support — not just to document — the process of change in participating schools.

The TLC Project began in the Spring of 1997. A three-stage process was used to identify and select schools that had demonstrated notable progress in their efforts to implement significant change over the preceding three to five years: (1) solicitation of nominations from ODE staff familiar with the Venture Capital schools, corroborating opinions from independent sources (e.g., Regional Professional Development Center staff), and statistical profiles for nominated schools (e.g., performance and demographic data); (2) telephone interviews with the principal of each nominated school; and (3) ranking of schools according to relevant sampling criteria. Twelve schools were chosen for variation in type (elementary, middle, secondary); location (rural, urban, and suburban from various regions in Ohio); focus for change (e.g., teaching and learning, professional growth, school-community partnerships); school improvement model; and evidence of progress.

The individual case studies were carried out during the 1997/98 school year by teams consisting of at least two members of the school staff and researchers from four Ohio universities that partnered with the schools. Each team designed and implemented a multi-method study of school improvement activities and outcomes in their school learning community. These included interviews, observations, surveys, and documents. While each case study reflected the unique character of school change at each school, the studies employed a common conceptual framework to guide their exploration and analysis of change in these school learning communities. The TLC framework oriented the case study teams to investigate change and change processes in multiple contexts — the classroom, the corridors, and the community — and in relation to three key processes of learning in organizations: collaboration, inquiry, and integration.

The major products of the Transforming Learning Communities Project include 12 individual case study monographs, a cross-case study and handbook, and a companion video at www.ode.ohio.gov.

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We would like to acknowledge the contributions of a number of people. Melinda Tsapasaris provided a first-person account of her experiences as a beginning teacher at Federal Hocking High School. Richard Thieret and Karen Noel both served on the research team and provided insight into our work. Catherine Glascock assisted in the research process of data collection. Steve Anderson was helpful in developing a conceptual framework for our work and providing research data and assistance.

We would also like to acknowledge the staff and students at Federal Hocking High School; they are the key players in this case study on transforming schools. Their vision, dedication, and continued hard work create a place of community and hope.

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Chapter One

Where Does Change Begin?

Introduction

This case study describes the transformation of a small high school in the rural, southeastern Appalachian corner of Ohio. We believe an effective way to introduce the study is to relate the first-year teaching experience of one of the case study researchers, who began teaching at Federal Hocking High School in 1990. In descriptions of her experience, she is not critical of the staff, for the school structures made it impossible to function as a collective professional body. The following vignette describes her feelings of isolation and frustration.

Vignette of a First-Year Teacher — 1990

Slowly walking up the cracked concrete stairs of Federal Hocking High School, I kept repeating, "I hate this job. I hate this job." Teaching was not supposed to be this way. During college I had dreamed of my classroom, my bulletin boards, my wonderful students, and my supportive principal. I could not wait to become a teacher. To me, a teacher was someone who could positively affect lives, someone who could really make a difference. I could hardly wait for my opportunity.

I now had it. I had obtained my first high school teaching position at Federal Hocking High School in Athens County, which appeared to be the perfect place. Situated atop a small hill in the middle of two cow pastures, the small high school was composed of around 400 students.

Reality hit. The day before school, my new principal gave me the names of the students in my seven classes, provided me two textbooks, and nonchalantly mentioned that second period was extremely small, consisting of around 12 students who had problems succeeding in a regular classroom. Assuring me that I would be perfect for the job, he added that there was not a textbook for the class or any materials. I should try to find something they could do and, perhaps, individualize their instruction. Later that day during a faculty meeting, several teachers introduced themselves, but most did not take the time, since I was just replacing a teacher during his sabbatical. One math teacher commented, "I heard you have the remedial English class."

"Oh, I do? I just received my class lists. Do you know anything about these students?" I innocently asked.

He looked over my class lists. "You're certainly going to have your work cut out. Just try to keep them in the room and out of trouble. You don't have to worry about trying to teach them anything. It's hopeless. They do like to play hangman on the board, though."

The more he talked, the more uncertainty I felt. Certainly he had to be joking.

I went home and examined the textbooks. Full of excitement and ideas, I began to plan for the first three days of school. Day one — I discovered that I did not have a room and would have to travel to vacant classrooms carrying my books and supplies. I also had no desk. Most of my tenth-grade classes proceeded to explain in detail how they "ran off" their last English teacher. They laughed, questioning how long I would last. Day two — not a good day. Day three — I resorted to playing hangman in second period; and fifth and sixth periods were disasters. I left discouraged, disillusioned, and defeated. I could not teach. After all the training and dreams, I could not teach.

My principal did not seem to mind that I was struggling, because I was just a "first-year" teacher. Quite concerned, I told him that I had several students who disrespectfully refused to do their work. He smiled, "You can't make them learn. Just leave them alone, and they'll leave you alone." Stunned. I questioned his statement and was rebuked for my inexperience. The other teachers, realizing that I would only be there for one year and not having the opportunity to interact with me, rarely volunteered assistance or kindness. I had no one. Struggling with the number of preparations, the number of new students, and the strange surroundings, I finally collapsed. On the Friday of my first week, I sat outside of the school on a concrete bench waiting for my ride. Tearfully, I sketched out a letter of resignation. "I don't deserve this. No one should be treated this way," I kept repeating.

I could not quit. Therefore, I made new plans, threw away my resignation letter, and headed off to school Monday morning. Almost every day that first year, I walked up the stairs repeating, "I hate it here." By Christmas, out of my seven classes, only two were still nightmares – failing grades, spit wad attacks, outbursts of anger, and the dreaded daily hangman. In the other five classes, though, I was watching students learn.

As I roamed the hallowed halls, I observed some of the older faculty. They, too, were barely surviving. Rarely did they smile or laugh; most did not seem to enjoy their career. I later asked one of the teachers who had been at the school for 20 years about her goals. She honestly replied, "To get an early retirement and get out of this place." She explained that teachers just "put in their time." It didn't matter if you were a good teacher; around here, you just had to be a "good disciplinarian."

As a young teacher, I had so many questions. How do I manage a class? How do I engage the students? How should I present this material? Is this a good idea for a project? My teacher training, though demanding and enlightening, did not prepare me for the realities of teaching. My principal showed no concern for my first-year adjustment, and the other faculty members were too busy trying to manage their schedules, students, and the paperwork. Teachers rarely discussed what they were doing in class, unless it was a horror story concerning student behavior or student failure. Thus I, like many teachers across America, had no one I could turn to. School had taken my energy and my enthusiasm and squashed it.

A School in Turmoil

Federal Hocking High School was a school in turmoil. This turmoil is evident when examining the interactions between individuals and the conditions of their surroundings. At faculty meetings, the principal would stand in front of the tables lined with teachers and try to give announcements. The louder he talked, the louder the teachers talked. Frequently he would say, "Now, it's really important that you hear this." The teachers' blatant disrespect vividly represented the atmosphere of the school — an institution of disrespect and mistrust. The principal did not respect the teachers, and thus they did not respect him. The teachers did not respect the students and, likewise, the students did not respect them. School was a place for anger, hostility, and defeat.

The walls in both the classrooms and halls were blank; student work could not be found anywhere. The rooms were painted a dreary dark blue, and most of the curtains at the windows were draped unevenly because hooks were missing. When it rained, teachers placed large trash cans throughout the halls to catch the rain because the ceiling leaked terribly. This place was supposed to be school — a place of security and learning. If the teachers hated the environment, what could be expected from the students? For most teachers, their innovative spirits were gone. The severe working conditions, compounded by a principal who lacked vision and control, had enslaved them, forcing them to realize that they were not working with a community of learners, but at a cold institution. Many of the teachers at the school had pessimistic attitudes and, therefore, were understandably on permanent moratoriums concerning their professional growth.

When the situations that these individuals encountered on a daily basis are analyzed, five major problems emerge: the problems of size, time, discipline, study halls, and misery. These problems in no way reflect the teaching staff or the students. They were the result of a structure that controlled people instead of permitting people to control the system.

The Problem of Size

The high student-to-teacher ratio undermined the quality of the education that students were receiving at Federal Hocking High School. Even though the teachers were well intentioned, they had to work in a system that did not promote high-quality student work. During the 1990 school year, most of the teachers averaged around 140 to 200 students each day. One teacher noted that these large classes created an "inability to reach all students in an effective way." The science teacher stated, "I had far too many students — far too many to know, far too many to direct and coach, and far too many to enjoy." Another teacher explained that because of the large number of students, teachers could not do "any in-depth study." One example given was that if a teacher has 150 students a day, he or she would not assign any writing on a test because of the time it would take to grade.

As teachers faced with such large numbers of students, they adopted quick and depersonalized coping strategies — strategies that get the class done. Gone were face-to-face conferences and teaching sessions with each student, gone were opportunities for counseling and behavior management. Scrapped were the time-intensive techniques of working with students on their behavior — bring on the demerit pad. The problem of size undermined the work of both teachers and students.

The Problem of Time

As a faculty, teachers also taught seven of the eight available periods. Thus, they had three, sometimes, four classes to prepare for each day. One teacher stated with great chagrin, "You cannot do a decent job seven classes a day." Every 44 minutes, the bell would ring. The current class herded out as another class scurried in. Another teacher explained, "Teaching was done by the most efficient method possible given the eight-period circumstance: the teacher was the deliverer of the knowledge, through lecture, worksheet, movie." By the end of the day, teachers were exhausted from trying to control and meet the needs of students. One teacher stated, "You couldn't form relationships, because there wasn't time." The problem of time forced teachers to find the most efficient methods of teaching instead of the most productive.

The Problem of Discipline

Discipline problems were a major concern for most teachers at FHHS. Each day, teachers would write the prescribed demerits for offenses and turn in the pink slip to the office. Many times, the list of demerits given out for one day filled two to three pages. One teacher had a student who skipped her fifth-period class on a continual basis. After one week of this student skipping class and the writing of demerits, the teacher asked the principal if the student would have some punishment, or if he could just help her find the refugee.

The principal said, "It is your responsibility to keep your students in the room. I can't go around chasing students. You just keep writing those demerits and make sure you give him his half of the pink slip." So the teacher did, only to discover that the inside door of the student's locker was decorated with them. This student skipped class almost every day for over two months, despite phone calls to parents and requests for administrative assistance.

Demerits are paper tigers. They look mean but have no bite. Teachers have to find another way, because the office doesn't even keep track of the demerits. – A teacher

School discipline in 1990-91 was bad. One teacher remembered, "Class skipping and smoking were rampant, gross acts of disrespect was common, and fights among students were frequent." Students would gather in the halls to spur on a so-called cat fight between two girls. Usually, two large male teachers would pull the girls off each other and make everyone go back to class. No one would get in trouble. The principal was unable to keep up with the disciplinary needs of the school, and teachers were frequently unable to control their classrooms and could not count on the office for disciplinary support. The discipline problems in many classrooms became the teachers' focus, pulling them away from the crucial issues of pedagogy.

The Problem of Study Halls

At Federal Hocking High School, learning was cheapened by the presence of huge study halls, halls filled with "I want out of class" refugees. One teacher noted, "Students could readily drop a class and go to study hall, to hang out or walk about the building." Most students were scheduled for one or two study halls each day; some students had study hall for three or four periods. Some 70 to 80 students would sit in the large room; some were talking, others putting on makeup, and others sneaking small wads of snuff. The teacher stood at the front trying to keep the room quiet for those who desired to complete their homework. Many times, the teacher spent his whole time screaming and writing demerits as students left to roam the halls. One teacher explained, "No matter how good you were, you couldn't control over 100 kids." Those students who were able to slip out of study hall unnoticed frequently raided broken lockers, stealing jackets, tennis shoes, and other valuables. Study halls were not furthering the learning process, and teachers realized the challenging problem it presented to their school.

The Problem of Misery

An atmosphere of misery permeated the school. One teacher stated, "It couldn't have gotten much worse. The way teachers and students felt, you hardly ever heard positive words." One staff member explained that the school was a place of confrontation: teacher vs. principal and teacher vs. student. Few students wore Federal Hocking High School varsity jackets. One student explained why: "I don't want

to be seen wearing anything associated with this school. It would be embarrassing." Most students lacked school pride. During eighth-period pep assemblies before football games, the cheerleaders cheered for a bleacher full of students. Rarely did the students participate. They sat, stared, and waited for the bell to ring, signaling their release. Teachers and students alike were miserable, as they were participants in a situation over which they had no control.

Desperation: The Impetus of Change

One teacher summed up that the teachers were a "desperate staff floundering in a broken system." However, as another teacher put it, "Desperation sparked people to propose and suggest changes." Thus, three teachers, at the height of frustration, asked the principal for permission to run the discipline system in the 1991-92 school year. All of these teachers taught seven classes per day and offered to give up their planning period to run the program. The principal gladly agreed.

> *We were frustrated with the system. That's why we took over discipline. We were failing not because of lack of expertise or students' abilities. We kept running up against systemic issues.* – A discipline-program coordinator/teacher

During the 1991-92 school year, the new discipline system worked. The students, keenly aware that demerits were being tracked and that teachers were hanging out in the bathrooms, subdued their behavior. One of the teachers in charge of the discipline program stated, "We ran [discipline] with an iron fist." One of the teachers leading the disciplinary committee could frequently be seen snatching students from lunch to pronounce their doom.

During this same year, three staff members began meeting to discuss how they could make their teaching situation better. The more they talked about what they taught, the more commonalities they noticed. They identified essential elements of their disciplines that they wanted to teach together, concepts that reached across the disciplines. They asked the retiring prineipal for permission to schedule 66 students in three back-to-back classes and one study hall, essentially creating a 132-minute block of time for interdisciplinary academics. The principal agreed.

> *[That] year was certainly a turning point. Three events occurred that planted the seeds of change. This was the year of an ineffective principal; three teachers began to experiment with altering the schedule for freshman required courses; and students, staff, and community were probably at their lowest level of support for the school — nowhere to go but up!* – A teacher

Change had actually begun at Federal Hocking High School. A small cadre of teachers initiated reform. Of course, the change was not systematically planned, nor was it connected to a national reform

movement. It was simple. It emerged from frustration concerning the present environment and a realization that teachers can make a difference in their environment, even if only minimally. The former administration, though not leading the changes, did not hamper the well-intentioned ideas of teachers who would take leadership. According to one teacher, many of the teachers had an understanding that "changes needed to be made if [they] were going to make a difference in students' futures by giving them the tools they need to succeed in today's society."

One month before the 1992-93 school year was to begin, a new principal was hired, but he quit after spending three days at the school, because few of the student schedules had been created and the main schedule was extremely sketchy. Desperately, with only two weeks before the school year would begin, the board offered the position to George Wood, a member of the community and a professor of education at Ohio University. Commenting on Wood's employment, a teacher offered that Wood was not "hired as a change agent. They wanted someone to control discipline."

> *I think when the current principal [Wood] came in, he saw that the school had some pretty major problems — discipline, scheduling, study hall issues. Teachers were just a bit disgruntled about the whole school.* – A Teacher

> *My initial impression when I came into the building was . . . it was sad. We had these old sheet-metal doors on the front of the building so you couldn't see out those doors. . . . No windows were in the front of the building. The lights weren't working there either. . . . The lockers were beat all to pieces; half of them worked. The physical environment — how could anyone like coming here? Why would anyone want to come here? . . . My impression of the staff, though, was there was a lot of energy; a lot of people wanted things to be better but just didn't know how to get it there. . . . We really did have some difficult kids. They thought they ran the school. They thought they were in charge. Kids can be in charge, but not that way.* – George Wood

When Wood accepted the position of principal at Federal Hocking High School, he inherited a place of "turmoil and mistrust."

As one teacher stated, "The school was ripe for change."

Chapter Two

Change at Federal Hocking High School

Introduction

From the beginning, change at Federal Hocking High School (FHHS) was led by the teaching staff. As noted in Chapter One, it was the teaching staff that took on the task of improving student behavior when it was felt that no one else would do it. It was also a team of teachers that proposed the first major teaching and curricular innovation: the interdisciplinary freshman team covering English, civics, and biology.

These efforts, while not opposed by the school administration, were not directly supported either. No changes in the structure of the school day, in the roles or rules that governed personal interaction, or in the curriculum were considered as ways of supporting the efforts of the faculty. While it was clear that the teaching staff was ready to reconsider how to organize the work of the school to better meet the needs of students, it was also clear that teachers would have to make any changes as individuals and not as a school.

Beginning in the 1992-93 school year, this was to change for a variety of reasons. Certainly one was the hiring of a new principal, Dr. George Wood. A resident of the school district and a professor of education at nearby Ohio University, Wood was hired only after the district tried and failed to replace the retiring administrator. Since Wood was hired with only three weeks left before the opening of the school year, there was a great deal of speculation and expectation about the directions in which he would lead the school.

Another impetus for change came from the community that the high school served. While for some students FHHS offered a quality education, many others were not well served by the school program. There was a concern in the community that was voiced by the school board during interviews of prospective principals that standards were too low, that the behavior of students was not acceptable, and that, in general, the good things that were going on in the elementary schools were not being followed up with a similar positive high school experience.

There was plenty of finger pointing as to who was to blame for the current situation at the high school. Some pointed at the departing administrator; others faulted the superintendent and board; as usual teachers received more than their fair share of blame; and the students themselves were called into question as to their desire to learn. No one was without someone to blame things on, but few had positive suggestions as to how to make things better.

The single biggest impetus for change came from within the school itself. The teaching staff had displayed by its prior actions a willingness to rethink and rewire the school. However, they did not have the license to think broadly about the school and were working primarily in isolation. The barrier faced by the staff was one of isolation, of not having had the opportunity to work as a team to make change. Clearly this staff of experienced teachers (with an average tenure of 16 years) had the expertise to create the learning community to which students were entitled. What they lacked was a school structure that gave them the opportunity to be the professionals they could be. In a word, they lacked any sense of democracy.

The story of change at Federal Hocking High School is one of building a democratic learning community. The school that FHHS is today did not happen in one year. It has taken nearly a decade to build the programs that are currently in place. Throughout that time, what stays constant is the desire by everyone in the school — administration, staff, and students — to expand the democratic process by which decisions are made about what changes in the school will help produce the very best student work. This, then, is the second constant: a focus on student work. The process of building a democratic learning community will be examined more fully in Chapters Three through Six. But to set the stage for that discussion, the history of change at FHHS is outlined in this chapter. (Appendix B shows a timeline.)

The 1992-93 School Year: Developing the Plan

The 1992-93 school year at FHHS could not have started in a more disorganized fashion. Hired only three weeks before the beginning of school, Wood was first confronted by a daunting task that he had assumed was long since finished: the master schedule. In his first day on the job, he had asked the school secretary to see a copy of the schedule in order to begin thinking about where to focus on change. She presented him with a cardboard box filled with hastily scribbled schedules on a variety of types of paper. "We put these in this box after students filled them out in the spring and haven't touched them since." There it was: no master schedule, no student schedules, no class lists. In short, nothing. "One more thing," she added, "this year we have to put all of this on EMIS (the state of Ohio's Education Management Information System), and I don't know how to use the system yet." No wonder the candidate the board had hired previously had quit after only three days on the job.

For the next three weeks and well into the school year, all the organizational energy in the school was devoted to working out student schedules. While nothing at all was done on any change agenda, this task turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

> *I knew the schedule of every single student in the school. I knew where we were providing a challenging experience, and I knew what students were just sliding by. I also knew many of the kids and what they hoped to accomplish in school. I probably learned more by hand scheduling every student in the place than I could have learned in any other way.* – George Wood, Principal

By the fourth week of school, all students were in their assigned places, and something resembling normality reigned.

Once the scheduling problems were finished, the task of rethinking the school in earnest was begun.

> *The best way to describe that year was one of uncertainty, skepticism, and hope. We were uncertain about the new principal. Was he just a "hit man" for the board? How long would he stay with us? Some of us were skeptics, we had seen reformers come and go and wondered if we were just fodder for his next book. And some of use were hopeful that meaningful change would now be possible.* – A teacher

At FHHS, like at so many other schools, the faculty had precious little time to build up working relationships with one another and the administration. Therefore, the process of change was as much feared as hoped for.

Beginning in mid-September, the principal began a series of meetings with individual teachers. The process was described by one staff member in this way:

> *Believing that teachers intuitively understand the strengths and weaknesses of their school system, [Wood] began by conducting interviews with each teacher. These interviews, which lasted approximately 40 minutes, gave him an opportunity to meet his [teachers] ... and understand their perceptions of the school.... He asked only three main questions: What do you think is the purpose for school? What are the goals for your classes this year? What are your professional goals?* – A Teacher

From these interviews, a report was made to the faculty members about what they had in common and what they wanted for their school.

Next, there was a series of department meetings where, again, teachers were asked what they hoped would be the result of their teaching. The principal reported back to the faculty again.

> *It seemed clear to me that many good teachers worked in the school, but they had lost to the motivation to experiment and create, because no one listened to them. No one ever*

gave them permission to do great things, and when they often did them, in spite of the system, they were not given any credit for the work they were doing. – George Wood

The first change that came about as a result of these meetings was a minor one, but one that was to set the stage for the work yet to come. In many of the meetings he was having with them, the principal kept hearing about the lack of respect for teachers' work. One comment summed up what many felt. "If they valued our work, they would give us time to do the work." The complaint is one that is often heard in schools. Teachers are expected to give of their time like professionals, with no concern for the hours they put in. However, they have none of the other professional prerogatives, such as control over their work or pay commensurate with their education. Asking them to make a commitment to work on school improvement without the time to do it only adds insult to injury.

In response to this concern and with the cooperation of then-superintendent Tim Lairson, a series of early dismissal days were scheduled for staff development. Allowing students to leave two hours early gave the staff the time to work together in longer blocks of time, rather than during the short after-school faculty meetings that seemed never to accomplish much beyond the reading of a few announcements.

Getting the time to work during the school day seemed to signal to all of us that [the principal] was listening. We were being given the opportunity to make change. – A Teacher

The first of the early dismissal days was held in November 1992. The staff gathered and was split into five smaller groups. For two hours, they were all taken through an exercise in which each team addressed each of the following questions:

What do we do well at Federal Hocking High School?
How could we do more of what we are already doing well?
What do we not do so well?
How could we change what we are not doing well?
What resources do we need to achieve our goals?

Lists were generated by each team, common items were compiled, and a master list was put together. A similar process was undertaken with a group of volunteer parents and a group of 50 students. What was interesting to everyone was that the same two themes emerged from all of the work sessions. The first was time. No one felt they had enough time to be serious about the work they were asked to do. FHHS was organized on an eight-period day and, without exception, teachers and students felt that there was not enough time in their classes to really accomplish very much.

The second theme to emerge was size. Even though FHHS was a small school, with a student body of fewer than 500 students (90 at the partner vocational school), it was felt by many that none of the students were getting the personal attention they deserved. Teachers had an average daily student load of over 145 students. Students felt that they were not able to get to work with their teachers, as they had

not enough time in class with them. And parents were concerned that many students were often overlooked, as teachers focused on either the more troublesome or the gifted students at the expense of those in the middle. Clearly something was amiss.

But change without direction is mere motion for the sake of motion. Over the objections of some staff members who thought it was a waste of precious time, Wood stressed the need to develop a school mission statement. Based on the work that had already gone on, the faculty was divided into teams and asked to brainstorm elements that might appear in a mission statement. At the faculty's request, the principal was charged with pulling together the various ideas into one document. In perhaps the first demonstration of the teaching staff's growing sense of empowerment, the draft provided by the principal was rejected for being too wordy and he was sent home over the Christmas holidays with a stack of suggestions and the instructions to "tighten it up." The revised mission statement was accepted at the January faculty meeting as follows:

MISSION STATEMENT

The Federal Hocking High School Community strives to help all students become lifelong learners, active democratic citizens, and to be flexible in their career choices. Central to this mission is helping young people develop the self-esteem necessary to feel that they can make a difference in the world.

To this end we work to develop challenging learning experiences that actively engage students and connect what they learn with the world around them. We also strive to create a school environment where diversity is appreciated; where students share the responsibility for acting with compassion, courtesy, and courage toward all; and where respect for one's own and other's heritage is fostered.

We believe the success of our students is dependent upon the ability of the school community to give direction, provide support, and meet the needs of individual students. We accept that challenge and invite the total Federal Hocking community to join with us in this task.

Now came the hard part: how to put this statement into action. While some staff members thought that the work would end at this point — yet another exercise in talking about doing something rather than doing it — the push was on to take action on all the staff had developed. Given that the focus had been time and size, teams of faculty members, parents, and students visited several schools in Ohio and Kentucky that had developed alternative schedules. The teams reported back to the student, parent, and faculty groups. By March, the faculty, with the student leadership group in attendance but not voting, had agreed to go to a four period, semester schedule (often referred to as a block schedule); begin an "Advisory" system to replace homeroom; and allow teachers to explore ways to teach in teams.

The advisory system provides an arrangement where every adult in the school takes on the role of a mentor for a small group of students. In this system, every teacher, counselor, administrator, librarian,

secretary or janitor meets on a regular basis with a small number of students. Unlike traditional homerooms, the advisory is not just a place to report for roll call and hear the morning announcements. It is, instead the key point of contact for each child and his or her family with the school.

During the month of April, the semester schedule was drawn up with modifications to allow some mathematics and agriculture courses to run the entire year. Additionally, curricular changes were suggested and made, one of the most unusual being two senior faculty members who taught typing and home economics offering to team-teach freshmen if all of them were required to take the course.

By the end of April, the schedule was finished and students were beginning to draw up their class requests for the following year. This does not mean that all was well in the school. There was a great deal of anxiety about the new schedule, and, at the district's May board meeting, a petition was brought forth by students opposing the change. Some faculty as well were complaining about the changes being forced upon them, in spite of the numerous meetings that were held.

At the recommendation of the superintendent, a second secret ballot was cast as to whether or not to continue with the changes that had been earlier approved. The results, while not unanimous, indicated that over 80% of the faculty was willing to go forward with the changes. The issue was settled for the time being.

What did not happen at this point was the type of staff-development activities that would have facilitated an easy transition to the new schedule. A reading group was formed to discuss Ted Sizer's *Horace's School*, but only a few, mostly younger, staff members signed up to attend. When asked about the lack of staff development planning, the principal freely admits it was something that was needed. "But quite honestly," he reflected, "the staff was so divided at the end of the year, I just figured we all needed a break from one another. And I needed a break from the school as well."

The 1993-94 School Year: Venture Capital and the Coalition of Essential Schools

If the 1992-93 school year was one of developing a plan for the school, the 1993-94 school year could best be considered a year of staff development designed to utilize the altered school structures. Little preparation was made for the altered schedule, the Advisory system, or interdisciplinary teaching in the prior year. Further, while the staff was generally pleased with the restructuring that had been undertaken, there was concern that the changes had not been planned well enough and that teachers needed additional preparation to work in the ways that had been organized.

It was at this point that the state of Ohio made available Venture Capital Grants designed to invest in schools that would make substantial changes. The faculty voted to pursue such a grant. The faculty decision, chose the Coalition of Essential Schools model from those offered by the state. The Coalition

of Essential Schools is an educational reform movement founded at Brown University in 1984 by Ted Sizer. In the Coalition model, teachers involve students in authentic work that is active and collaborative, has evident values and clear goals, and generates more ideas, connections and challenges the more it is pursued. A committee of senior faculty, parents, and the principal was charged with drafting a grant proposal that would be submitted first to the school board and then to the state.

During the fall of 1993, most of the work in the school was devoted to adapting to the new teaching climate and developing the Venture Capital proposal.

> *We pretty much were on our own with how we used the time in our classes. I went through most of what I had planned for the first month in about five days. It was a real adjustment and I needed help with it, but we didn't seem to have a plan on how to help teachers.* – A Teacher

Scattered attempts at professional development were made, including sending two teachers to the Coalition of Essential Schools' Fall Forum. For the most part, however, little was being done.

Believing that faculty would be interested in staff development, the principal attempted to organize a School Study Council that would meet after school to discuss issues of teaching and learning. However, few teachers attended. "I was confused," Wood noted. "I knew that teachers wanted professional development, but I couldn't figure out how to get it to them." The School Study Council was abandoned after two meetings, because few faculty members came to them. "One of the senior members of the faculty came to me and let me know it was nothing against me. The fact was, they were so busy trying to plan to use the longer periods that they did not have the time to hang around after school."

Adding additional impetus to the need for faculty development was the awarding of a Venture Capital Grant to the high school by the state. A celebration was held in the library on the morning the faculty was informed, with one point stressed again and again: This was to be the faculty's grant. A steering committee of faculty, made up of department chairs and open to anyone else who wanted to volunteer, was in charge of the grant and the passing out of all professional-development funds. Determining how the money was to be used was put in the hands of teachers, not the principal.

It was at this point that one of the faculty members approached Wood with a staff-development plan that would involve everyone in the school. The idea was to organize research-in-action teams based upon the questions that the faculty had about their work. By the end of March, eight key research areas were identified and faculty teams were formed. The topics included: Ability Grouping, Active Learning, Interdisciplinary Teaching, Preparation for Life, Habits of Mind, Long Periods, Graduation by Exhibition, and Learning Styles (Multiple Intelligences).

Beyond faculty, parents and students were recruited to be involved with the teams. Parents were given information at spring parent/teacher conferences, and at least one parent joined each team. For

students, a video was produced that described the work of each committee and offered students an opportunity to be involved. In response, students joined each research-in-action team. For the rest of the year, the teams were busily involved in creating their team structure, deciding what approach they would take to the research, and beginning their work. Central to all that was to be done were the following guiding questions that each team was undertaking:

Interdisciplinary Teaching

What is/is not interdisciplinary teaching?
What methods and approaches are used, and how effective are they?
What evidence is available that supports the efficacy of interdisciplinary teaching?
Can any of this information be used at FHHS?

Graduation by Exhibition

What is an exhibition?
What can we reasonable expect our graduates to be able to do and to say?
What content/skills should be included in an exhibition?
How do other schools implement this approach?
What are the attitudes of other school's faculty and students concerning Graduation by Exhibition?
How could this approach be implemented at FHHS?
How can we help students with exhibition choices and career planning?

Preparation for Life

How do we measure the success of our graduates?
What skills are need for life?
What skills does our school presently provide?

Active Learning

How do we get all students involved?
How do we keep students consistently on task?
How do you deal with the exceptions?
How do you evaluate fairly using different methods?
How do you get students to realize that learning continues throughout life?

Long Periods

How do teachers and students see the longer periods?
What effects have the longer periods had on the school?
How are teachers using the longer time periods?

Habits of Mind

What are "habits of mind"?
What will be our schools "habits," and how will we decide upon them?
How many "habits" should we have?
How will the "habits of mind" affect instruction and curriculum?
Will our school's "habits" change over time?
Will these "habits" be a part of a district-wide initiative?

Ability Grouping

What is ability grouping?
What are the advantages and disadvantages of ability grouping?
Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?
Will ability grouping be beneficial or detrimental to FHHS students?
Should students be ability-grouped in all areas, some areas, or not at all?
If ability grouping is or is NOT beneficial for us, how do we begin to organize students?
How does mainstreaming tie in with ability grouping, if at all?

To facilitate the coordination of the work of all committees, a steering committee was formed and named the OWL (Opening Windows to Learning) Committee. The OWL Committee consisted of the chair of each research-in-action committee and was chaired by the teacher who had suggested the plan. In addition, the chair put out a school newsletter affectionately named *The Hoot*, informing everyone of the work of all the committees. Each committee was budgeted $2,500 of Venture Capital money and was asked to come up with a research plan. During the month of May, the entire faculty, along with the students and parents on its teams, went to Alden Library at Ohio University to do research. By the end of the year, each team had collected enough material to put in a summer reading booklet that was distributed to the faculty.

During the spring, faculty began several other initiatives. Throughout the school year, two staff members had team-taught the freshman English and social studies courses. In response to that work, there was some interest in continuing the teaming at the sophomore level. When the schedule was designed, two staff members agreed to take on a sophomore humanities block, and Venture Capital monies were set aside to support their development work in the summer. The mathematics staff, as well, wanted to alter its program, believing that the remedial mathematics they were doing was not effective. So, for the 1994-95 school year, the schedule was altered to eliminate general mathematics courses and begin all students with either algebra or pre-algebra.

Perhaps the biggest curricular change during the year had been the addition of the Internship program.

> *I had noticed several students who spent a great deal of time in the front office. They were good kids — a lot of help. But surely there was something more they could do with their time.* – George Wood

After they were interviewed about career goals, two students suddenly found themselves out of school for part of the day, working in fields they thought they might want to pursue. One was at a local hospital in the nursing program, and the other was doing interior design work at a local firm specializing in museum development. Sensing the potential of this program, the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation provided a grant to FHHS to hire an internship coordinator to expand the program in the following year. Such a person was hired, students were scheduled, and, over the summer, placements were made which would expand the program from two to 30 students.

As is often the case, new staff had to be located as well during the spring of 1994. During the prior year, the process for hiring staff at FHHS had begun to be changed by putting more control of the decision in the hands of the staff. This year, the process was to take on its current shape, when students, as well as faculty, were given control of the hiring process. Candidates for teaching positions were invited to come spend a day at the school, during which they would teach one course. A team of students met with and interviewed candidates and observed their teaching. A team of faculty did the same. After separate discussions, the two teams met and sent a recommendation to the principal. This is a process which is now part of the culture at FHHS and is, in fact, a component of the Student Constitution at the school.

Two activities culminated the 1993-94 school year. The first was a presentation by the leader of each of the research-in-action teams to the school board about their work. The hope was that by better informing the community of the efforts at the school, the amount of support for the program would increase. The presentations by faculty went well, the community was informed, and the staff felt that their voices had been heard. The second activity was a year-end cookout held the last day for teachers. After each research group had time to meet and make plans for the coming year, the meal was served. Everyone left feeling as if this may have been one of their best years ever.

The 1994-95 School Year: Building on Successful Staff Development

The momentum of the research-in-action teams carried over into the next school year with a kick-off meeting held in early September. Keeping with the owl theme, the meeting was called a Hootenanny and was designed to bring together all the teams over dinner. During the meeting, each team designed plans for the year, shared those plans with other groups, and began ordering materials for the new faculty library. A schedule for each team to present its results to the faculty was completed as well.

In addition to the staff-development work, teams of faculty were continuing to work at new ways of organizing the school's curriculum. For both freshmen and sophomores, their humanities courses (English and social studies) were double-blocked with a team of teachers integrating the material from each area. This lead to numerous major projects, including a Colonial Newspaper, trips to Gettysburg, and evening

presentations, such as the night when the school was transformed into America in the 1920s, complete with students portraying famous people and running a speak-easy. The Internship program, now in its second full year, also held an evening presentation of internship portfolios and began to attract visitors from around the state. And finally, in senior English, students were for the first time required to prepare a major paper including a student-staff presentation. All of these papers, and the visual-aid material that went with them, were displayed at a presentation in the spring, along with the best of the papers being presented to the assembled audience. (These innovations are traditions that continue to this day.)

One of the major efforts at restructuring at the time was the development of the English department's portfolio for all of their classes. Students were to collect each year a number of particular types of writing samples that would then be reviewed annually to assess progress. Later, this approach would be used by the entire school in developing new graduation standards.

By November, a decision had been made by the faculty to apply for membership in the Coalition of Essential Schools. As part of this interest, a team of 16 staff members and two students went to Chicago for the 1994 Coalition's Fall Forum. It was the first time a large group from the school had ever attended a conference together, and it is still recalled as a major unifying experience for the staff.

The Hoot continued to be a major source of information for the entire faculty. Articles were published by each research-in-action team, and reviews of materials, as well as announcements of faculty-development opportunities, were provided. The teams continued to meet, materials were being shelved and checked out, and the OWL Committee held regular meetings to monitor the progress of the work and handle all requests for Venture Capital funds. The process of applying for funds underwent the most revision this year, as it was decided that all applications had to demonstrate a clear connection to the school mission statement, the Coalition of Essential Schools' Common Principles (see Appendix C), and how the information obtained by the expenditure of these funds would be shared with the rest of the faculty.

This is not to say that everything was running as smoothly as possible. The school continued to struggle with Advisory, a program that several teachers opposed from the beginning. With no real focus except for housekeeping tasks such as taking role and hearing announcements, the time was often seen as a waste by staff.

There were also theoretical and philosophical disagreements among the staff about where the school was headed. These did not often show up in a public way until the first research-in-action team reported in December. By agreement of the OWL Committee, the first team to present was on Graduation by Exhibition. It was felt that much of what the school would do in terms of curriculum and pedagogy would have to be based on what the staff saw as the end result. As part of their work, the committee had invited Joe McDonald, head researcher for the Coalition of Essential Schools, to one of the early dismissal sessions to discuss graduation platforms. These platforms were the skills and abilities students were to have when graduating from a school that could be turned into portfolio items for a graduation portfolio.

The Graduation by Exhibition team presented as planned on December 14, even though the principal was home sick and unable to attend. The meeting was facilitated by the chair of the OWL Committee, and the discussion was, as one faculty member described it, "exciting." The debate reflected some teachers' concerns that the staff should just be improving on what was currently being done. Other staff members felt that they needed to push on to a graduation exhibition, because only when knowing what students were to do upon graduation could one then design a curriculum.

Other issues emerged as well. One senior staff member responded to the presentation with an angry memo circulated to all the staff. In it he indicated that he was "highly offended by the comment that 'eight years ago we were doing nothing' or that 'all was chaos.' That's not intangible rhetoric, but just plain BS, and the comment did not sit well." The tension in the air the following days at the school was obvious, and everyone was extra careful not to talk too much about the meeting.

Returning to school confronted by all the sound and fury, Wood decided to hold meetings with both the chair of the OWL Committee and the faculty member who sent around the rather testy memo. By the break for Christmas, wounds had healed to the point where the memo writer took on trying to help the staff develop a list of key concepts, abilities, and skills that all students should have when they graduate from high school.

When school resumed in January, the series of research-in-action team presentations continued. As was recorded in *The Hoot*, these presentations were designed to build up each teacher's toolbox of skills.

> *We need to keep reminding ourselves that our team presentations do not signify the end of our work. The topics that we are researching and presenting are TOOLS that will assist us as we continue our work. Just as it would be difficult to change a tire without the proper tools, so it is difficult to restructure a school and our teaching without proper tools. Think of it this way, we all carry around our "Professional Teacher Toolbox." Through our team presentations, we are just adding more tools. You just never know when you might need it, and you can't believe how having the right tool makes the job easier!*

As if to drive home the point that the job had only begun, at the next research-in-action team presentation, Wood began by challenging the faculty members to think about what they were working on and what would come next.

> *I see four areas that we are working on. The first we've already figured out: that's the use of time. We've created our four-period schedule to reduce teacher load and to give kids more time to do quality work. Number two, we're looking at the notion of student as worker/teacher as coach. Many of the teams are finding ways to engage students in their own work. Number three . . . we're beginning to tackle the issue of graduation standards . . . to graduate we only require that kids have 20 credits of D work. Since we've changed our schedule, kids have the opportunity to take 32 classes. So . . . they can fail 11 of them and*

it's okay. . . . The last area we are looking at is our school environment or atmosphere. We're trying to make this a safe place for kids, a place where they fit, a place where at least one person knows them and accepts them. We've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. I commend you for your efforts. Very few teachers take their jobs and their commitment to education as seriously as you do. Now we need to be thinking about our next step. Where do we go from here? What new teams should we create? – George Wood

The work of the research-in-action teams was now winding down with their presentations and the information the staff was gathering. It was time for another overall look at where the school was going. To do that, an all-school "advance" — (one FHHS faculty member who was a military veteran insisted that he "never retreated") — was planned for March. To prepare for the advance, in addition to the research-in-action team reports, the biweekly "planning-period" meetings that were held began to focus on graduation standards. Begun the first year of the four-period day, planning-period meetings were held every other Friday. During these meetings, teachers who were on planning during a particular period met for the first half of the scheduled time to discuss school issues. Usually the principal had an agenda, which has included such items as reviewing each of the Coalition of Essential Schools' Common Principles, visiting each teacher's classroom for a mini-lesson, and discussing events happening in the school and community. Leading up to the advance, the main topic was graduation standards.

The "advance" was held at Salt Fork State Park during early March. All faculty and staff attended, along with a dozen parents and a dozen students. Prior to the advance, a packet was distributed that included all the results of the research-in-action teams' work and recommendations. As an additional kick-off item, it was announced that FHHS had become only the fourth school in the state of Ohio to be granted membership in the Coalition of Essential Schools.

For two days at the advance, small groups met to discuss the staff work to this point and what issues were still to be dealt with. What emerged was the sense that the past two years had focused primarily on staff development to enable the faculty to find new ways to meet the needs of students in the revised time and size structures in the school. Now it was time to turn to modification of additional structures that were not necessarily meeting the needs of our young people. In particular, the faculty, staff, students, and parents of FHHS agreed to form new research-in-action teams to address the following four areas: Graduation by Exhibition, curriculum at FHHS, school atmosphere, and the Advisory Program.

The 1995-96 School Year: Changing School Structures

After two years of focus primarily upon staff development, the 1995-96 school year focused primarily upon changing structures in the school. The OWL Committee continued to function. Now it was made up of the chairs of committees that were looking at curriculum, school atmosphere, and Advisory; the committee that drew the most attention was Graduation by Exhibition.

This is not to say that staff-development work halted. When the staff member that had designed the research-in-action teams left for a leave of absence, the faculty was clearly dismayed by the reduction in staff-development activities. Continuing to work on teaching was a priority and, in the spring of 1996, the faculty invited this staff member to return for the following school year to conduct all staff-development activities. After meeting with each staff member about his or her needs and interests, she designed a plan for a 1996-97 school year (explained in that section).

In terms of curriculum, the interdisciplinary teams continued to work together in the humanities and met frequently to discuss ways to expand their work. Efforts were also underway to bring together the arts with various academic courses and to integrate mathematics and science. New courses were being tried out as students made requests for them. And a full-time internship coordinator was brought into the building in cooperation with Tri-County Joint Vocational School.

Student government in the school began to change as well. While students were still elected by class to the Student Council, the council began to take on more authority and responsibility. Meeting daily in Advisory with the principal, the council went beyond fundraising and organizing homecoming. They took control of approving all club meetings and fundraisers, were responsible for writing the student handbook, and organized the student teams that selected new faculty. While none of this was in an approved charter, the role of students in decision making was widely accepted by the staff.

There was also a wide variety of staff-development initiatives going on. A team of 15 staff and one parent went to New York City for the Coalition of Essential Schools' Fall Forum in November. Several teachers were involved with the National Paideia Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and were working on developing a seminar approach in their classrooms. The Paideia seminar approach is based upon student-centered learning and democratic decision making. Additionally, a number of staff were involved in a year-long workshop run by Ohio University on cooperative learning.

But clearly most of the attention was focused on the issue of Graduation by Exhibition. Early in the year, this committee, led by a staff member who was in charge of scheduling, began to realize that its task was more than merely coming up with a set of exhibitions for graduation. Additionally, this work would require that the entire school be rewired to help students meet these new standards. At virtually every early dismissal meeting, the topic was the standards that students should meet and how to align the curriculum with those standards. As the scope of the committee's work expanded, so did the number of members on the committee, until it grew to over 30 teachers, parents, and students.

A great deal of support for the committee's work came from Venture Capital funding. In addition to those funds, a grant was given to the school by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation to support the drafting and implementing of the potential graduation portfolio. These funds allowed the teacher in charge of the process to be released one-half time from teaching to direct the work of the committee.

By April of 1995, a report was drafted and mailed to all high school and middle school parents describing the proposed graduation standards. The committee had met frequently and the staff had discussed each proposed standard at several meetings. Recommended were two sets of changes. First, that each student would have to prepare five portfolios for graduation described as graduation standards. This would include the following:

Standard 1: The Academic Portfolio
(To include the required 25 credits, as well as subject matter portfolios.)

Standard 2: The Independent Living Portfolio
(Including financial, personal, and wellness skills.)

Standard 3: The Citizenship Portfolio
(Including a variety of citizenship activities.)

Standard 4: The Career Portfolio
(Including a career file and an out-of-school experience.)

Standard 5: The Senior Project
(A major project to be taken on independently by a student.)

Additionally, the standard for course completion for graduation would go from 20 to 25 credits distributed as follows:

four English credits (specifically English 9,10,11,12)
three social studies credits (specifically American Studies 1 and 2 and Senior Government)
four mathematics credits
two science credits (specifically science 9 and one more)
one-half health credit
one-half physical education credit
one-half nutrition credit
one-half keyboarding credit
one senior project credit
nine elective credits

Presented to the school board at their May meeting, the board tabled action on the standards until a series of community meetings could be held. No one on the staff was ready for the hostility directed at both the standards and the school at these meetings in May. Parents accused the school of not running a satisfactory program and teachers of deliberately losing student work. The tone of each meeting was combative and uncooperative.

The committee reworked the proposal over the summer meeting with two board members, who were assigned as a Curriculum Committee. The proposal was streamlined, the number of portfolios

reduced, and the entire package was again presented to the board at its August meeting. Again the proposal was tabled, with a request being made that before the school institute any additional changes, the current program should be assessed by an outside agent. The principal then met with the board president and the superintendent, an agreement was made that the school would seek accreditation from the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges and that the board would consider the credit changes only at the September meeting. While there was still extensive discussion and debate, the new graduation credit requirements were approved and the portfolio was put on hold.

The 1996-97 School Year: Some Crises

The year started, as noted above, with a new set of graduation credit requirements for students, beginning with the incoming freshman class. Most of the curriculum was as it had been the prior year, with the exception of a vast expansion of the internship program. Now students had to apply formally for internships when doing their scheduling, create a resume for the application, and go on an interview. This was one more piece in a very complicated registration process of which the faculty is very proud.

Unlike registration processes in which students submit a list of courses and a computer tries to sort out conflicts, students are hand-scheduled at FHHS. In the spring, a tentative schedule is drawn up and tried out on a variety of students. Once it seems that most conflicts have been resolved, the schedule is given to seniors, who must choose courses from that schedule and then meet with the guidance counselor to make sure their requests match what they need for graduation and what they are interested in doing after high school. Juniors are scheduled next, going through the same process, except that they meet with the principal. Sophomores meet with the head of scheduling, and freshmen, as most of their schedule is predetermined, meet with their eighth-grade teacher to choose the electives they would like. While time-consuming, this approach insures that all scheduling is finished before the end of the year and that each student has been given personal attention in the process.

With the schedule in place much as it was the prior year, attention again turned to staff development. The model utilized this year was directed by the teacher who had designed the research-in-action teams and who was hired back to the school using Venture Capital monies. Staff members met during their planning periods with her once a month and did everything from developing new units for their classes to reading and discussing materials about classroom management. The goal was to meet the expressed need of every teacher. When those needs came together with teachers who shared a planning period, they often worked together on projects, like the celebration of the Day of the Dead planned by the Spanish and art teachers.

In addition to the work of individual teachers, entire-school sessions were put on by in-house experts. Two faculty members had undergone extensive work with the Paideia Center and were conducting Socratic seminars in their classes. The rest of the staff members were quite interested in this

approach and spent a couple of early dismissal days on developing Socratic seminars for their own classrooms. Many teachers were using more visual displays of student work, and an after-school workshop was presented by the art teacher on ways to get the best visual presentations organized. A member of the science department had attended several workshops on portfolios and presented a similar after-school session on use of portfolios in classes.

Meanwhile, the administration was working on securing North Central Association accreditation and on instituting the new graduation standards. By March, provisional accreditation was given if the school could secure additional teaching and building resources. Additionally, a much smaller committee continued to meet and work on the graduation-by-exhibition agenda in order to keep alive that possibility.

In March, the school was rocked by the school board's non-renewal of George Wood's contract. Without commenting on any reasons, the board voted three to two to not renew, ignoring the recommendation of the superintendent and requests by staff, students, and parents that Wood continue as principal. The day following the non-renewal, a majority of the students walked out of school in protest, requesting that the board president meet with them to give reasons for the dismissal. For two months the school community focused on little else as students held sit-ins, parents circulated petitions, and Wood pursued a legal strategy to get his job back.

Two other interesting events took place during the continuing debate over Wood's contract. The first was the staff of FHHS voting to join the Site-Based Management program in the district. For three years, the high school had refused to join the Site-Based program, unlike the three other schools in the district.

> *The problem with Site-Based [Management] was that it did not include students and [it] limited decision making to just four faculty. We had become used to making decisions as a whole group. But once we realized it was possible that he (Wood) might be gone and we could lose that power, we decided to put in Site-Based Management and make it work for us. In fact, we talked about appointing (the principal) as a parent member on the site-based team.* – A Teacher

> *I was always proud of the fact that our faculty voted overwhelmingly not to join the Site-Based program. Not because they did not want to have power, but because they saw the site-based structure as limiting the democratic processes we had in place.* – George Wood

The second event was the attempt by the student government to institutionalize its power by approving a Student Constitution. For three months, a team of students drawn from each Advisory worked on writing a constitution. Their work was referred back to each Advisory for review by sections until, in mid-April, the entire student body approved the document by a three-to-one majority. The Student Constitution was sent to the school board for approval. Unfortunately, the board tabled the Student Constitution and requested some revisions. Worked on over the summer, the constitution reappeared the following year and was finally approved at the board's December 1997 meeting.

By mid-April, the board had reversed its prior decision and Wood was rehired for a two-year stint. It is hard to judge why the decision was made to not renew, as neither the board members who voted to not renew nor Wood will comment on the issue. But what was clear is that a great deal of the momentum behind the work on graduation standards had been lost.

The 1997-98 School Year: Involving Students and Community

So much energy had been devoted to issues surrounding the principal that the 1997-98 school year began without much fanfare. The main focus was simply starting the year, as remodeling construction on the school building required a one-week delay of opening day. However, a number of initiatives were continued and expanded, leading to several important events in the life of the school.

The first was accreditation by North Central Association. This was a stipulation from the board before continuing with consideration of graduation standards and exhibitions. Now the committee was reconvened, and staff began working again on this proposal. As noted above, the Student Constitution was also approved. This revised document called for expanded student participation in decision making; the various student groups began work on this process. At the pre-school workshop (which was now a tradition, replacing the usual hurried half-day meeting the day before school opened), a student-run peer mediation system was also approved after having been developed and recommended by a student. A team of four staff member and the principal went on an Outward Bound experience in North Carolina in order to investigate this approach of engaging students in the school community. Finally, a Critical Friends Group was begun in the school using the model designed by the Annenberg Challenge and the Coalition of Essential Schools. In December 1993, former U. S. Ambassador Walter A. Annenberg offered U. S. metropolitan areas the opportunity to apply for funding for school reform from a total grant amount of $500 million. The Critical Friends concept was one of the challenges that was developed by the Coalition for Essential Schools. What had started off as a quiet year rapidly developed into one of the most important years of change for the staff.

One initiative that did not work as well as had been hoped for was the new approach to staff development. Just prior to the school year, the former staff member who had been directing staff development decided that she could not continue on in that effort. In an attempt to continue the process, the principal took over the planning-period meetings made up of volunteers who wanted to focus on a particular area. While some work was done during the first semester on seminars, portfolios, and cooperative learning, it was not as beneficial as it had been in years past.

With so much going on, it was decided to again hold a March "advance." This time, without a release day, the advance was held on a Friday night and Saturday, and staff members were not required to attend. Nevertheless, all but two staff members attended, along with half a dozen students and a dozen parents. The advance was organized by a team of students in the school study seminar course, offered for the

first time this year. The students took care of all the details and helped organize the agenda and the reading materials for the meeting. Upon arriving at the advance, the participants were organized into teams around the themes of graduation standards, connection with the community, school atmosphere, and the Advisory program. Work in each of these areas preoccupied the staff for the rest of the year.

The Graduation Standards team was re-formed as a result of the "advance" and, in conjunction with the school-to-work efforts in the state, reformed the proposal for graduation exhibitions. Now termed a Graduation Portfolio (building on the idea of the Ohio's Career Passport), the faculty recommendation included the following components built on the school's mission statement:

Graduation Portfolio Items

1. *Career Folder (including transcripts, career plan, letters of recommendation, etc.)*
2. *Citizenship Folder (including six separate demonstrations of citizen action)*
3. *Skills for Lifelong Learning Folder (including senior paper and project and an academic showcase of the student's choice of his/her best work)*

In addition, the committee recommended adding one science credit and requiring a senior project credit of all students, bringing the total number of credits required to 27.

The Connection with Community team recommended a series of community forums, which were held that spring to inform community members about the school program. Based on their recommendations, the high school also assisted with a school district newsletter, which included news about the school, that was to be mailed to community members; additionally, with Venture Capital funds, a review of the experiences of the past five years at the school, complete with data on student success, was put together and mailed to all members of the school district.

Recommendations from the School Atmosphere and Advisory teams were combined into one program. Advisory had continued to be problematic because of a lack of focus. The goal was to use Advisory as a place for students to put together their portfolios and to engage in school/community building activities that would be organized by grade level. Using the experience the school was having with the Outward Bound program, the notion was to use an "Expeditionary Learning" approach to grade-level activities. The goal of Expeditionary Learning, as developed at the Harvard School of Education, is to provide students with critical personal and academic opportunities through intellectual and experiential expeditions. Themes were approved for each class, and tentative activities were decided upon.

By the end of the school year, the schedule had been revised to meet the new graduation standards, which had been sent to the school board, and plans were made for a summer meeting that would launch the new Advisory system. But there was one more innovation yet to be carried out.

As part of the "advance" in March, the School Atmosphere team had hatched the idea for a day-long school Olympics. The idea was that by having a wide range of games in which students could participate, all students would have an opportunity to be winners. Additionally, the teams were to be organized by the students in the school study seminar and were to be made up of students from all grade levels — another part of the strategy to bring the school together. In the end, the activities took place over two days: the first annual "Lancer Games," totally arranged and run by students, took place without a hitch. Throughout the school, students participated in pie-baking and eating contests, an Internet scavenger hunt, egg-drop contests, a comedy contest, Twister, relays, a chess tournament, and many other events. Prizes were awarded to winners, but the most important thing to come out of the event was the feeling of school community as teacher and students just enjoyed one another.

The 1998-99 School Year: A Consolidation of Change

As this case study is being concluded, the 1998-99 school year has begun. The prior spring, at the board's May meeting, a team of teachers and students presented the new graduation requirements. At the third reading of the requirements in August, they were — after four year's work — approved by the school board.

In preparation for the school year, a team of 12 rising seniors and five staff met for one week to explore the Expeditionary Learning concepts that were to be used during the school year. Then, in mid-August, a two-day workshop was held to introduce all staff to the Expeditionary Learning notions. On the first day of the school year, half the day was devoted to team-building initiatives in each Advisory and simply making sure students were connected with their groups.

Building on this experience, class activities have been planned and are being carried out around the various themes. For freshmen, the theme is Where Am I? Activities have included a Local History Tour, which took place in their humanities block, and a Career Day which will happen in the spring. Sophomores are working on the theme, Where Am I Going? and will undertake a mapping and orienteering activity in their humanities program and a college visitation day. Juniors will be taking on an outdoor activity known as a Tyrolean Traverse, which involves building a rope bridge over a valley as part of their How Do I Get There? theme. Seniors are given the option of taking on an urban expedition to Chicago as part of their Am I Ready? theme. Seniors are also planning for the first-ever Senior Showcase, in which they will show off all they have accomplished in high school over a two-day period. In addition, each grade level is carrying out additional activities, including service projects.

Portfolio development is also going on in Advisory, as students have all been issued the format and requirements for the portfolios. Two staff members have taken on the task of devising a handbook and guide to the portfolios for staff, students, and parents to use. This year, the first portfolios will be approved for graduation (see Appendix D).

The new student government format is gradually being phased in. Now made up of a Student Council with representatives from all clubs, organizations, and classes, this body of over 15% of the student body meets on a monthly basis to set policy. The smaller Student Trustees continue to meet with the principal daily and carry out the directions of the council. Still experiencing growing pains, the student government continues to play a vital role in decision making.

As an innovation on the Site-Based program, the faculty at FHHS has included more parents beyond the stipulated number in order to broaden representation. Additionally, two students, selected by student government, also sit on this panel. In keeping with the decision-making traditions at the school, the committee works by consensus and usually submits all of its decisions to a vote by the whole faculty before anything becomes policy.

The faculty continues to exert its resistance to change for the sake of change, especially when its members feel they are being asked to join in with a preset package. During several faculty meetings early this year, the effort to utilize expeditionary learning was called into question. It was agreed that parts such as initiatives in Advisory and the Advisory themes were parts of the program readily adapted to the aims of the school. However, parts of the program which involved curricular and organizational changes were put on hold, as the staff wanted to make sure that what it was doing worked before it did anything additional.

Thus, the current year might best be seen as a year of consolidation of change: a year in which the Advisory program, which has been a source of contention, takes on a purpose commonly ascribed to by the school and is thus used more advantageously; when the graduation-requirements debate is over, and efforts can be focused on observing and recording how the new standards impact on student learning; when a curriculum guide is put together by department chairs that demonstrates how all the teaching and learning activities fit together in the school; and when the agreed-upon thought processes — habits of mind — begin to play a larger role in instruction and school management.

After six years of dramatic change, the school appears ready for a rest. Having worked to build a democratic learning community, many of the community's members appear to be anxious to just find out how well things would work without any additional changes. On the other hand, it appears that the impetus for change continues: recently a committee has been formed to review the freshman program for greater freshman success, and the Advisory program takes on new challenges. As with any democratic community, change is most likely the only constant.

Chapter Three

Teachers and the Democratic Learning Community

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the teachers at Federal Hocking High School and their role in creating a democratic learning community. This phrase, "democratic learning community," precisely describes the faculty, their interactions, and their processes. Democracy revolves around key tenets of decision-making process, the ideals of responsible membership in the community, participation, and respect for the democratic process. Learning, on the other hand, implies inquiry, problem solving, and the development, acquisition, and application of new knowledge for those involved — in a word, change. Thus, when examining the school reform and professional development at FHHS, one observes a faculty engrossed in learning and changing as it systematically and democratically transforms its school.

From 1992 to 1999, professional-development activities in Federal Hocking High School emerged from faculty needs as they were immersed in school reform. Thus, professional-development activities changed each year as the school changed. Professional development and school reform activities are so intertwined that many times it is difficult to separate the two. The initial school improvement initiatives sparked a definite perceived need for professional-development activities. The more teachers learned and experimented as a result of these activities, the more open they were to school change.

When democracy undergirds school reform, school life changes for both students and teachers. School becomes a place where students and teachers can be heard and can question. It becomes a place where collaborative activities and inquiries are the norm, a place where people can create and change.

In March of 1998, at an "advance," George Wood addressed faculty and community concerning the school's commitment to become a genuine community of learners, "a place where every person is valued, where learning is the primary objective, where rules and requirements make sense to all, and where respect and trust and high expectations mark every interaction. Difficult? Yes. Impossible? No. Doable? If we want to." At Federal Hocking High School, the administration, teachers, and students desired to take on the difficult task of creating a democratic learning community.

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Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1994) describe a research-based conceptual framework of the critical elements of a strong professional community. With this framework used as a springboard, the following describes the presence and evolution of a democratic learning community for teachers at Federal Hocking High School.

A Democratic Community

The FHHS faculty has created and participates daily in a democratic community. The democratic community can best be explored through two of its main aspects: (1) the involvement of the entire faculty in shared decision making and (2) the placement of teachers in leadership positions in the school (teacher empowerment).

Shared Decision Making

Wood's commitment to the concept of a democratic school and the strategic actions he has taken in collaboration with teachers to enact democracy in the school have enabled teachers to collectively take charge of professional decisions about discipline, academic and extracurricular programming, scheduling, standards, pedagogical approaches, student evaluation, and more.

Authority to determine lunch duties and extracurricular assignments does not suffice. Permission simply to decide how to comply with the implementation of externally mandated policies ignores the autonomy side of the empowerment equation. Most of the changes at Federal Hocking are changes which have evolved from needs identified by teachers and from solutions determined by teachers.

> *[Wood] definitely empowers the teaches to do whatever we can to make the school better. If we get excited about something, he's going to do everything he can to help us reach our goals. We voted down site-based management in this school twice, because we thought the current system of change was working so well. We didn't want change to be centered on one group or committee as opposed to the whole staff, because whenever we made a change, we went in front of the whole staff and voted. The whole change process here had been real open and democratic.* – A Teacher

Wood explained that the teachers did eventually vote for a site-based team in 1997 only to institutionalize their decision-making power when they feared he would be fired. Yet to not undermine the group democratic process, the site-based team meets each month the day before the faculty meeting. After its debate on decisions, it brings main issues to the entire faculty for discussion and vote.

To establish democracy, Wood continually created vehicles for shared decision making. Wood created a steering committee to oversee the Venture Capital expenses (the OWL Committee); this committee, in turn, produced a newsletter to guarantee that each faculty member received information concerning all decisions. All major decisions, the committee decided, had to be approved by the entire faculty. During each faculty meeting, Wood would have several items on the agenda that the faculty needed to discuss and decide upon. One example was a rule stating that males were not permitted to wear hats inside the building. Pointing out that he saw this rule being violated numerous times in the hall and in some teachers' classrooms, Wood asked the faculty to discuss the rule, to decide whether or not it was worth having, and whether or not they would be willing to enforce it.

> *It doesn't make a difference to me whether we keep the rule or get rid of it. But if we're going to have a rule, then we need to enforce it. Notice the "we." I'm not going to be the "hat police." If we vote to keep the rule, then we all need to enforce, no matter how we feel about the rule.* – George Wood

After a heated discussion, the faculty voted to keep the rule, with an understanding that everyone was to accept the role of "hat police."

The teachers, along with the students, take full responsibility for hiring new staff members. After interviewing many candidates, the teachers and students submit the name of the person they believe would be best for the position. Wood, trusting the process, hires their suggestion.

Wood stated that he just had to "trust the democratic process." If the faculty works together to make decisions, then they must also shoulder the responsibility for their decisions. He commented that the democratic process works more often that not. "If you make the wrong decision," he answered, "then everybody has to own it." At Federal Hocking, teachers do own their decisions, for they realize that they made them together.

Teacher Empowerment

Teacher empowerment at Federal Hocking had begun prior to the appointment of Wood, when a group of teachers took charge of discipline in the school and began to experiment with scheduling and program changes in the lower grades. When Wood began his administration, he encouraged teachers to accept leadership positions within the school. To facilitate teacher leadership, he provided release time for teachers through creativity in scheduling, grants, and substitutes. One teacher took responsibility for each year's schedule. This same teacher, released through grant monies, spent half of his day assuming the position of assistant principal. He oversaw much of the disciplinary needs of the school and chaired the main committee on the new graduation standards.

Another teacher took responsibility for school computers; he repaired them, installed them, and ordered new hardware and software. The two teachers who were trained in seminars became the resident experts, providing after-school workshops and visiting classes for demonstrations. The department chairs took full responsibility for their meetings and their departmental work. As teachers expressed interest in various school activities, Wood automatically encouraged them to take leadership and then supported them in this new role.

One teacher assumed responsibility for the school's professional-development program for four years. She scheduled workshops, wrote the professional-development newsletter, developed and maintained a professional library, and chaired the OWL (financial) committee. When the OWL Committee became fully functioning with a chairperson and regular attendees, Wood relinquished power. He never led another OWL meeting; he only participated as an equal. Glickman (1993) states that a democratic school "becomes a true community, and power given up by an individual becomes power gained by all" (p. 43).

Teachers were also empowered to design new courses to engage students in content directly related to their personal interests and those of the teacher. For example, teachers integrated social studies and English to form humanities courses. These courses focus on several main stops throughout history and correspond to the local history in Athens County. Science teachers created a ninth-grade course that provides a basic introduction to physics, geology, biology, and chemistry. They also designed a course called "Earth, Moon, and Stars" and offer a local environmental biology course in which students investigate deer. Teachers have been empowered to enhance the curricula.

The teachers at Federal Hocking created their own school through the decisions that they made. Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun (1993) state that effective leadership "is not embodied in a 'strong man or woman' who manipulates others, but in the ability to generate a democratic framework and process that binds the organization productively" (p. 29). Faculty decisions not only created the process but shaped and directed it. The shifting of power created schoolwide participation, and teachers owned this process. Through shared decision making and teacher empowerment, Federal Hocking High School represents a democratic community.

A Learning Community

The teachers at FHHS not only participate in a democratic community but are also active members of a learning community. Their learning community can best be analyzed by examining four teacher traits: their shared norms and values, their collective focus on student learning, their collaboration, and their de-privatization of practice.

Shared Norms and Values

Teachers at Federal Hocking High School have collectively affirmed their common values on key educational issues. Their personal mission statement and the Coalition of Essential Schools' principles have been instrumental in establishing a common vision and language for talking about what the faculty has been striving to achieve in the school.

In the spring of 1992, the faculty members adopted a mission statement that they had painstakingly developed over the school year. This mission statement represented their common philosophy in that it portrayed the educational goals for their students and school. But this mission statement existed only on paper. Its power had not yet materialized, for it had changed nothing. A mission statement is powerful only when it guides thought, action, and attitude. The professional-development activities breathed life into the mission statement. When faculty identified topics to research, the topics were identified in relation to the mission. A financial request for professional development had to explain how the activity related to the mission statement. When the Graduation by Exhibition research-in-action team presented to the faculty, the team began by distributing copies of the mission statement and reading it aloud as a springboard for their presentation. The OWL committee provided copies of the mission statement for teachers to display in their rooms. A large poster of the mission statement found a home in the teachers' lounge right next to the professional-development library. The mission statement became a tool to guide action and to unify the faculty with a common purpose.

The nine common principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools also guided the faculty members as they developed shared norms and values. During Friday planning period meetings with Wood, teachers frequently discussed one of the principles to understand it more deeply and to implement it more fully. The teachers all shared the same language. Common teacher phrases emerging from the principles revolve around asking students "to use their minds well" and "student as worker and teacher as coach." Teachers discuss "Graduation by Exhibition" and strive for a school tone "of unanxious expectation, of trust, and of decency." The philosophical underpinnings of the principles continually permeate faculty discussions.

The shared norms and values among teachers appear to have taken hold most strongly in relation to the democratic processes which have been established at the school and which have enabled and empowered teachers to collectively take charge of professional decisions about the school. While there is obviously a high degree of consensus concerning the schedule, curriculum, and pedagogy, there are differences of opinion expressed among the staff. Teachers talk about respect for individuality, for differences of opinion, for dissent, and even for opting out of things, but not for subverting the democratic process.

As in any democracy, teachers continually voice opposing positions, even though they share common values. In a memo that Wood had sent the staff, he voiced several of his opinions concerning the social studies curriculum. One staff member openly opposed these views:

> *I've already written a memo to [Wood] and circulated to the other staff. It was well received by George. I rebutted a lot of comments he made about our world history curriculum. I knew he would accept it. He always wants to hear everyone's opinions, and he did. He thanked me for writing it and we're going to talk about it today.* – A Teacher

Teachers express freedom to argue their positions without fear of recrimination from the administration or other teachers. The democratic process established at Federal Hocking has contributed greatly to the evolution and maintenance of shared norms and values among teachers.

Collective Focus on Student Learning

In schools characterized by strong professional community, teachers work together to maximize the learning of all students. They have high expectations for all students and a high sense of their own capacity to reach and teach all learners. Such is the case at Federal Hocking High School. Wood, speaking at the faculty advance in 1998, explained this focus.

> *Over the past seven or so years, Federal Hocking High school has undergone a dramatic change. Initiated by the staff in 1991-92, these changes have had a profound impact on the quality of life within our school walls. As we heard last night, our attendance rate, honor roll, test scores, college attendance rate, and student and staff satisfaction are all up. Discipline referrals are down, as are the number of students failing classes. Clearly, what the staff has done at FHHS has been in the interest of "what's best for kids."* – George Wood

This phrase also appears in the school letterhead.

As Wood facilitated the democratic change process, he and the teachers used a vision of what they wanted their students to learn as a result of the changes they would make.

> *We worked at this sense of vision with our staff before we began thinking about what changes to make. The first step was to ask ourselves one simple question: What would we like our kids to be like and be able to do as a result of their 5,000 hours with us?* – George Wood

As teachers turned their focus to student learning, they would often drop their focus on individual or departmental preferences. One teacher stated that he believed one of the most drastic changes at Federal Hocking was "teachers' talk," because teachers were encouraged "to continue learning how to reach students and to raise their expectations."

The collective focus on student learning drives the changes at FHHS. One veteran teacher explained, "We've been doing a lot of changing and finding out a lot of new information. We just need to remember that good teachers are continually changing; they change to help their students learn." The scheduling change occurred because teachers believed it would improve the quality of student work.

One teacher explained that students now have to write more papers, have more essays and, in general, do "better quality work. . . . We're getting better work from students." Another teacher commented, "The structural changes have empowered us to enforce high academic standards." The teachers desired that a diploma meant more than 21 credit hours of D– work. To exhibit students' knowledge and skill, FHHS teachers have mandated a graduation portfolio and presentation. They require seniors to complete a senior project. These changes all emerged from efforts to enhance student learning.

Collaboration

As a learning community, FHHS teachers collaboratively explore pertinent issues relating to their school and students. The initial seeds of collaboration among teachers at Federal Hocking are rooted in the collective initiative of a group of teachers who banded together to address the critical problems of school climate and student learning prior to Wood's arrival. Wood arrived at a propitious moment and was able to build from this spontaneous collaborative initiative. Wood notes, though that the majority of the "faculty weren't used to working together. They didn't trust each other. They couldn't imagine working together." During one faculty meeting, one teacher even gave a speech against allowing people to team-teach together.

The heart of collaboration has been developed through collaborative professional development activities, through team-teaching, and through the planning meetings for shared decision making. The majority of professional-development activities at Federal Hocking have been collaborative. As the Johnsons (1987) suggest, collegial learning with a cooperative structure promotes four outcomes: social support, professional self-esteem, achievement, and positive interpersonal relationships. Collaborative inquiry serves as a powerful tool in uniting, inspiring, and encouraging teachers.

Collaborative Professional-Development Activities

During the first couple of years, the research-in-action teams, although temporary collaborations, were novel and professionally invigorating for teachers. The research-in-action teams were collaborative. These initial collaborative teams served several purposes. First, faculty members had the opportunity to become personally acquainted with one another. Knowing each other personally made it easier to work with each other professionally. Second, the collaborative teams promoted professional growth while helping the faculty learn to work together.

During an after-school work session in September of 1994, the Active Learning research-in-action team held a meeting. They had collected dozens of articles. One teacher began:

Teacher: *I just wonder how teachers here use active learning. You know, the bell rings, you close the door, and you never know what goes on in other people's classes. Well, I know a little bit about the two guys next to me, but that's only because these walls are so thin and I have to listen to them all day long. But I don't know anything about other teachers.*

Teacher 2: *We know that some teachers are using active learning. I mean, look around.. Student work is everywhere.*

They continued their discussion and decided to conduct a questionnaire to identify the different ways teachers at Federal Hocking are already using active learning.

Teacher 3: *I think it would be cool to make a video to document active learning.*

This last suggestion was well received, especially by the student members on their team.

While these teachers worked together, seven other groups planned, read articles, and discussed issues. These research-in-action teams provided the foundation for collaboration at FHHS.

Team Teaching

Scheduling arrangements introduced in the first two years created the time and space for interdisciplinary planning, which was encouraged and supported, but not mandated. It has flourished among teachers, because teachers found it professionally rewarding and beneficial for students. Once teachers learned to trust each other, they began opening the doors for collaboration. Originally, team teaching had been mainly limited to dyads. For example, an English teacher teams with a social studies teacher; they are double-blocked with the same cohort of students and planning time. Then all teachers who taught freshman and sophomore English and social studies began teaming — still team-teaching in dyads, but attending the planning sessions as large teams.

Planning Meetings for Shared Decision Making

Shared decision making itself promoted collaboration because of the necessity of face-to-face meetings. Wood explains that teachers are willing to put the time into these meetings if they can visualize a positive effect from the time given. Teachers meet to make professional decisions and then act upon them.

> *We have so many meetings; it gets so hard. I think there's meetings all week after school. And then you interact with so many other people in the building, and in a number of different capacities — that develops a lot of trust. There's been a lot of shared risk taking from member of the staff; that's brought them a lot closer together. We've rewritten all of the curriculum — just about everything has been rewritten, and revised and revised and revised.* – A Teacher

In sum, teacher collegiality appears to be institutionalized at FHHS.

Reflective Dialogue

Teachers at Federal Hocking talk about their situation and the challenges they meet. They use these conversations, though, to critique their personal teaching and the effectiveness of the school they have

created. Teachers must have opportunities to construct new meanings that are applicable to their own classrooms. In the investigation of current educational practices or deeply embedded traditions, the teacher must be able to analyze the past, present, and future, making connections where applicable. Reflective dialogue most often occurs during the Friday planning meetings, the team planning sessions, and the work of the Critical Friends' Group.

Friday Planning Meetings

The Friday planning meetings, as one teacher described them, help teacher keep in touch "with the pulse of the school and where the needs are." The focus of these meetings is on important issues related to the directions the school is taking, not on the routine operational matters of the school.

> *Every other week, staff meets with the principal during a planning period to discuss issues of importance. The principal welcomes teacher suggestions and therefore teachers feel more a part of the decision-making process. I think this contributes to good morale, as well as to improved communications. Teachers from different content areas share ideas. We have a good time doing it, too. It is an important time of reflecting on what we are doing that could be done better and how we can accomplish that.* – A Teacher

During these meetings, Wood and the faculty continually raise new issues and concerns. They evaluate their work according to the Coalition principles and their mission statement, while exploring suggestions and proposals.

Team Planning Sessions

Reflective dialogue also occurs in team planning. Teachers reflect on content connections, demanding projects, and authentic assessments. The mutual questioning serves to push thinking and teaching. For example, a social studies and English teacher met during their shared planning time to plan a field trip to the Athens Historical Museum genealogy section and to Ohio University's library as part of their interdisciplinary unit in freshman American Studies and English classes. In the local history component of this unit, the students investigate the histories of different villages in the school district, complete a family tree and autobiography, and collect oral histories from family members. The two teachers discussed strategies for organizing the students into small groups composed of four students who live in or near the same villages. Each student was considered; and, with some shifting and realignment, the teachers succeeded in placing them all in heterogeneous groups of four or five for the local history investigations.

Critical Friends' Group

The Critical Friends' Group, though consisting of only four members, epitomizes reflective dialogue, as these four teachers observed one another's classes and provided critical feedback on lessons using various protocols.

De-Privatization of Practice

Professional learning community is demonstrated when teachers openly share, observe, and discuss each other's teaching methods and philosophies. Because of the isolation associated with most high schools, de-privatization of practice can be challenging for teachers. Though one group of teachers was working together when Wood became principal, most teachers remained behind closed doors.

A context for the de-privatization of practice was created by the adoption of the four-period day, with longer periods, that required teachers to explore options to traditional teaching and encouraged interdisciplinary teaming. This teaming prompted teachers to begin sharing ideas and methods across subjects. Again, the research-in-action teams caused movement in the de-privatization of practice through the collaborative teams, especially the Active Learning team, which produced a video that, for the first time, opened the doors of many teachers' classrooms for the faculty to peer inside.

The Active Learning team's video showed FHHS teachers creating active, engaging projects for their students. The Work and Family teacher's classroom appeared on the screen. After preparing menus, the students were cooking at the different stations in the room. The teacher walked from group to group helping. Music played in the background and then would fade so the students' comments could be heard.

The setting quickly switched to the Ancient Cultures class, which was outside on a dig. Carefully, students excavated mounds to discover the hidden treasures that the other half of their class (a different culture) had created. In the background, Randy Travis' song *Digging Up Bones* played softly.

Teacher after teacher appeared on the screen, their classes pulsating with energy and activity. When the video ended, teachers applauded.

> *It was so inspiring for me to complete this video project! While making this tape, I was able to see the changes that we have made and to see how we are all working hard to make our school a better place.* – A Teacher from Active Learning team

The seven other research-in-action teams, especially the ones on Interdisciplinary teaching and Multiple Intelligences, also created awareness of expertise within the building that teachers could draw upon.

A pivotal point in the de-privatization of practice occurred the year that a former teacher facilitated individual planning sessions with teachers and joint study groups on topics like rubrics, portfolios, and seminars. During the individual planning sessions, teachers opened the door to their classrooms by sharing their plans, projects, and student work. Together, the former teacher and the teachers reflectively examined these products while exploring new pedagogical techniques. For the first time, several teachers were creating projects in mathematics classes. Some teachers, totally unfamiliar with rubrics, developed them with the former teacher's assistance. As she conversed with teachers, they identified topics of interest and need; then the former teacher planned the after-school pizza-party workshops to

continue work on these issues. During the session on rubrics, most of the time was allocated for teachers to develop a rubric and receive peer feedback. Because teachers had experimented with many of these issues in the individual planning meetings, they felt the safety to experiment with a larger group of teachers. While these individual planning sessions and joint study groups did not persist, the de-privatization of practice has become institutionalized as a norm at the school for many teachers as they now participate on teaching teams.

At Federal Hocking High School, the teachers are members of a democratic learning community with a central focus: what's best for students. This community is democratic in that the teachers have a voice and corresponding responsibility, which emerged as teachers participated in shared decision making and in leadership positions. This community also supported teacher learning as the faculty collaboratively engaged in the creation of shared norms and values, while focusing their work on student learning. These collaborative interactions among faculty eventually led to reflective dialogue and the de-privatization of practice. In sum, the teachers at FHHS represent a faculty engrossed in learning and changing as they systematically and democratically transform their school.

Chapter Four

Students and the Democratic Learning Community

Introduction

Since the beginning of the change process, students at Federal Hocking High School (FHHS) played a central role. While students are often overlooked as sources in the change agenda in schools, the decision at FHHS was to begin with students being actively involved. In fact, the principal cites the leaving out of the class of 1993 as one of his biggest errors when considering what changes were to be made for the following year.

> *I thought that since they were graduating, they wouldn't care what we did in terms of changes for the following year. I was wrong. They [the senior class of 1993] took great offense at being left out of the discussions about change and told me so both directly and indirectly in plenty of ways.* – George Wood

It was a mistake not to be repeated.

While the engagement of students in building the democratic learning community at FHHS had a tentative beginning, it has grown throughout the change process. Over time, students have emerged as full participants in the learning community through active decision making, by taking active roles in the school community and the community outside of the school, and through assuming responsibility for their own education. Each of these areas is discussed in what follows.

Students as Decision Makers

Beginning with the proposed changes to the schedule at FHHS, students have played an ever-expanding role in decision making. When, during the 1992-93 school year, the faculty was exploring how the school might better function, students were called upon to do the same. A group of 50 students was pulled together to meet with the principal and several staff to go over the same questions the staff was considering. This group reported to the staff about their own concerns with time and size, and was

asked to stay together to comment on the various proposals and mission statement that were developed through the year. Students also participated in site visits where, in order to explore options for change, teams of staff, parents, and students visited several other schools. Two students from the group were assigned to the Steering Committee that developed the new schedule; and, when it came time to vote on the proposed changes, the students were invited to the faculty meeting. However, they were only in attendance and were not given any voice or vote at that first meeting.

During the 1993-94 school year, the role of students expanded to participation in the research-in-action teams. What was interesting about this was that their presence on the teams was requested by the staff. Having seen the good work the students had done the prior year, staff members knew of the value of student engagement in the process. Student participation was viewed as so valuable that a videotape presentation about the teams was made to be shown to the student body in order to recruit volunteers.

During the 1994-95 school year, student engagement in decision making was more formally expanded through changes in the student government system. Now called the Student Delegation, students were appointed through an application procedure by graduating students. The goal was to eliminate the popularity contests that student elections had begun and to find students who would actually work at schoolwide decision making. Additionally, attention was paid by the seniors to selecting a diverse group of students to represent the entire school. The delegation met in Advisory daily with their advisor — initially a teacher, and later the principal — in order to keep up with the daily workload they shared. Beginning this year, this included the scheduling and approving of all student affairs; reviewing, rewriting, and approving the student handbook; and appointing students to teacher selection committees, among other duties.

Perhaps the most notable of these was the voice students were given in selecting teachers. Committees of both students and staff were formed whenever there was a teaching vacancy, with each committee interviewing candidates independently. The students were responsible for selecting their committee, drafting interview questions, and carrying on the interview on their own. At the end of the process, students and staff met together and reported to the principal on their recommendations — recommendations that led to the choice of candidate.

Throughout the process of change, the role of students in decision making has become the norm. Students played a vital role in the Graduation Standards Committee and shared in writing and presenting the final report. Beginning in the 1997-98 school year, a school study seminar course was begun that involved students in researching issues in the school and making recommendations for changes. Students are included in every building-wide committee that is formed and are involved in all major school decisions.

Two recent developments have institutionalized the decision-making authority students have. The first was the approval of a new Student Constitution. Written by a team of students and approved in a vote of all students, the constitution forms a two-tiered student government. The legislative body is the Student Council which consists of elected representatives from all clubs, organizations, and each class. Meeting monthly, the council sets policies and approves actions taken by the smaller executive body known as the Student Trustees. Trustees are appointed by the council and meet daily with the principal, overseeing student activities and carrying out the directives of the council.

Students have also been asked to become part of the site-based team at FHHS. Though not included in the negotiated agreement, the FHHS team was expanded to include students after approval to such a plan was granted by the faculty. From being silent observers in the 1992-93 school year of school changes, to taking an active part in making schoolwide decisions, students at FHHS play a central role in democratic community.

Active Participation in the Community

As restructuring has expanded at FHHS, so has the participation of students in the school and surrounding community. The vision guiding this participation is put this way by one staff member: "If our kids are to become active members of our community upon graduation, the way to get them ready for that is to have them be members of the community while they are in school." Through both out-of-school and in-school experiences, students are engaged in community life.

The most obvious initiative designed to so engage students is the FHHS internship program. Awarded the Ohio's BEST (Building Excellent Schools for Today and the 21st Century) Award in 1998, this program places students with community sponsors during all or part of the school day. Internship sites range from hospitals to museum design firms, day cares to lawyer's offices, manufacturing enterprises to physical therapy providers. To date, the school receives more requests for their student interns than they can fill.

The commitment of students to their internship is one of the program's most noted features. Frequently, students will make it to an internship site, even though they are too ill to make it to school for the other parts of their school day. During one snow emergency, when most roads and services were shut down, it was the interns from FHHS who staffed the nursery at the local hospital. As a student put it, "If I don't make it to school, well, school will go on. But if I miss my internship, something that I was to do will not get done."

Most students see the internship placement as a job-shadowing experience. However, the school sees it as "a chance to join up with the adult world," according to the internship supervisor. The current program places over 80% of the schools seniors and 25% of the juniors in sites around the county.

Students may also intern within the schools itself. As opposed to the teacher aide approach often taken to get students out of study hall, school interns must meet the same requirements as students working outside of the school. This includes a pre-placement interview, recording of timesheets and a journal, a final presentation, and a career essay and resume at the completion of the program. Within the school, interns have organized the two all-school "advances," are responsible for arranging and conducting all visits to the school, and have put together an alumni directory.

Interns are also responsible for a school-service project that provides funds to students who need assistance in paying for the internship experience. To date, any student who needed assistance in paying for transportation or special clothes for internship placement has received that assistance from funds raised at the school.

In multiple other ways, students participate in the life of the school community. Whenever problems — ranging from an increase in litter in the building to racial tensions — emerge that require student solutions, students are brought together to discuss and recommend solutions. Over the past seven years, more and more school assemblies are held for such events as National Honor Society inductions. And when the master schedule is designed at the school, students are surveyed to identify course interests and to try out the various versions of the schedule by creating mock schedules to see where the conflicts may be.

Throughout the school, the agenda is to have students take responsibility for their community. This is such an important task that it surfaced repeatedly at the school "advances" and led to the work with Expeditionary Learning. As a result, beginning in the 1998-99 school year, each class (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) is taking on a school service project, as well as running one major school event. As is the case in most areas in the school, the ways to engage all school residents in the democratic learning community seems to expand each year.

Directing Their Own Education

While many schools provide students with ways to be involved with community participation and some expand student decision making, what distinguishes a democratic learning community is the degree to which these are both informed by students taking responsibility for their own education. Having the ability to control one's own learning provides the personal efficacy necessary to engage in larger decision-making areas. Unless students feel they are in control of their own lives, they will have few tools with which to take control of the community life around them.

A wide variety of strategies designed to entice and enable students to take control of their own learning show up in classrooms at FHHS. The first area one notices in terms of student direction is in work within classes. In most subject areas, students engage in self-directed projects. Without fail, stu-

dents are asked to choose a topic or idea of their own which they will use for research. The following examples in the following vignette are taken from classroom research observations.

Vignette: Student Responsibility for Education in the Classroom (Field Notes)

In a creative writing class, a teacher began the class by having students vote on the genres they would most like to explore. The final vote resulted in students writing children's books, short stories, and soap operas. "I couldn't get them to stop reading and writing, once they had made their selections," commented the teacher.

In the freshman humanities core, students take on a local history project in which they choose a part of the district to research. The projects culminate in exquisitely drawn maps, videotaped interviews with local community members, and Web pages on the Internet with local information.

In statistics class, students design their own research project involving telephone polling on issues of concern to teenagers.

In senior English, a major research paper is expected of all students, the topic and presentation style being of their own choosing.

In local biology, students make choices about the particular animal or plant species they want to take on as their own for research.

In career and independent living, students are turned loose to uncover the career and college they want to research and present to the class and school through a poster presentation.

In classes such as senior science seminar, school study seminar, and entrepreneurship, students can be found designing their own research agendas and producing products of their own design. All of these classes are totally dependent upon student decision making about the direction of the course and the style of project they will undertake.

Beyond individual work, students are also given control over large displays of student learning that are presented to the entire school community. In the humanities area, the school has been transformed by students demonstrating what they have learned in various areas with such programs as a Renaissance Festival, An Evening in the Colonies, and a Roaring Twenties Festival. Seniors take center stage with a public display of their work on Senior Projects night, and interns show off their experiences in an award and recognition dinner. All of these activities are scripted, organized, planned, and carried out by students, with teachers providing the support necessary for students to demonstrate what is of interest to them.

Students are also given control over the shape of their academic day; on one level this involves the creation of their own schedules. FHHS has a very high number of credits and required courses for graduation; but rather than have students merely list the courses they want and then ask the school to figure it out, they are given a master schedule and asked to figure out their own approach to their academic calendar. Each student meets with his or her advisor and then a member of the staff who does building-wide scheduling and discusses what they are scheduling and why. The focus is on having students build their own educational future rather than rely upon the whims of a scheduling computer.

Within each day, a block of time is also set aside for students to control. A one-hour lunch period between second and third period is a time for all students to use as they see fit. School resources such as the gym, library, science laboratories, agriculture shop, and tutoring areas are open for students to use. And some students, because of poor study habits or repeatedly failing proficiency tests, are assigned to tutoring during this time. But for most students, the hour at lunch provides them with a time to make their own choices about how to spend their time — quite a change from the old schedule (and the schedule many high school students experience), every minute of which is controlled.

Finally, beginning with the class of 1999, every graduate is expected to put together a graduation portfolio. Outlined in Chapter Two, this portfolio is the responsibility of the student. Students gather the required materials from their classes with the assistance of their Advisory coach and put together a display of their work for the past four years. In several areas, the type of work is specified; but in several others, the judgment about what represents each student's best work is left to the student. Most student attention is focused on the Academic Showcase, where they are to present three separate examples of what they consider to be their best work in high school. Additionally, each student takes on a senior project, where they take on a project of their own choosing and produce a major piece of work.

Here is where student control over their own education is the most pronounced and the most fundamental, with students taking control of their own record for graduation.

> *We wanted to let students "keep their own books." Rather than have students always depending upon someone else to collect the materials, usually credits, that determine when they were ready to graduate, we wanted them to control this themselves. The graduation portfolio puts them in charge: they collect the materials, they decide what is important, they decided what best demonstrates what they have learned.* – A Teacher

> *I guess that [the graduation portfolio] is my way of telling people who I am and what I have learned. I think I will be proud of it, and I think I will look at it more than once after I graduate.* – A Student

In classrooms, in the overall schedule, and in the graduation requirements, FHHS asks its students to be responsible for their own learning. Behind this is a drive to have students become responsible citizens, to know what they want to know and what they need to learn.

Creating Democratic Citizens

In the FHHS mission statement, the desire to help students become "active democratic citizens" is proclaimed as one of the major agendas for the school. What emerges from this study is the way in which such active citizenship is nurtured through the creation of a democratic learning community. Rather than rely upon telling as away to develop such citizens, the school takes the approach of having students experience such a community.

In reviewing the comments of staff and students and the documents from the school, one takes away a sense of focus on the work of students in all that is done in the school. Repeatedly, staff members talk about student work, students talk about their work in class; and the principal, in several documents, refers to the issues in the school being "about the work of students, not about the work of adults." It is this focus on student work that results in the hands-on approach to inculcating the habits of democratic citizenship in the school's students.

No matter how inconvenient it is for staff, students should have experiences that empower them as democratic citizens. This belief has resulted in a wide variety of ways in which students play a central part in the FHHS learning community. Through decision making, taking part in the welfare of the community, and directing their own learning, students become empowered as community members. It is a process of which the faculty is clearly conscious, and it is discussed at numerous school forums.

> *Our success is best demonstrated by the affection our upperclassmen feel for the school. When they are freshmen they seem to fight us all the way — just tell us what to do, they'll say. . . . But by the time they are seniors they jealousy guard their prerogatives to make decisions and direct their own work. And when you ask them why they like the school, it is this sense of empowerment that they will mention first.* – A Teacher

In an interview, a student about to graduate echoed that sentiment. "My teachers have made sure that I take responsibility for me, for my education and my school. That is something I will always carry with me; it is the most important thing I have learned."

Chapter Five

Marshaling Resources for Democratic Change

Introduction

Is Federal Hocking High School and its transformation to a democratic learning community unique? Is it possible to replicate what has occurred in this school, or is this a special situation which could not be repeated in other contexts? Much of the answer to this lies in the resources the school community gathered together to make change happen.

A note of caution must accompany this chapter. Because of its interesting programs, FHHS has worked with several other schools on the change process. In one instance, the faculty was deeply involved with another school, including presenting inservice experiences and site visits. This school, which was also a small high school located in southeastern Ohio, went rapidly to work to institute what they had begun to call the Federal Hocking Plan. Within half a year, the staff had abandoned the program, which they had embraced with so much hope, and returned to prior ways of doing things.

Why did this attempt at copying the Federal Hocking approach fail? Does it demonstrate the non-replicable nature of change? According to the faculty involved with this exchange, the problem was not with change: it was with vision. "They just thought they could do what we were doing without having the vision behind it. They were buying a program, not a goal," commented one teacher who had been involved with this collaboration. Another teacher who led several of the inservice programs and coordinated the exchanges put it this way:

> *What they did was transplant an organ without making sure it would fit the patient. It worked for us. So why not for them? ... The problem is that it isn't that easy. You first have to know what the problem is and what you define as success, then you act on change. They jumped over the first steps.*

In this respect, the notion of Ted Sizer, founder and director of the Coalition of Essential Schools, is correct when he insists that every good school is different from every other good school. The notion

of "one size fits all" is really "one size fits no one," and everyone gets upset in trying to squeeze into a structure that was not made by them to fit their circumstances. For genuine restructuring or transformation to occur, it requires not opting into someone else's package. Rather, as with the case of FHHS, it involves marshaling the resources that are available to deal with the particular challenges faced by the particular school. What can be learned from FHHS is how the vision guided change and how resources were marshaled to make this change occur. That is the focus of this chapter.

Before going further, it is probably important to set out some of the demographics of Federal Hocking High School. As noted earlier, it is a small rural high school with 400 students on campus and another 90 at the partner vocational school. It serves a geographic area of over 210 square miles in the southeastern Appalachian corner of Ohio. Unemployment is high in the area, as is the poverty rate, with FHHS students in the fifth percentile in terms of average family income in high schools in Ohio. Located near Ohio University, many families have a member employed there (primarily in the service areas) and turn to campus for entertainment, recreation, medical care, and other resources.

The Staff

Key to the transformation at FHHS was the teaching staff. Often calls for school reform or change seem to imply, if not say outright, that the teaching staff must be changed or improved. In *The Human Side of School Change* (1996) Robert Evans, notes that school reformers often operate as if the school is an empty building and that merely saying things should be different will make it so. This approach to school restructuring denies us access to the skills, accumulated wisdom, and passion of the teachers currently at work in the schools.

At FHHS, transformation began with listening to the staff. It was staff ideas that drove the changes made in the school. All work began with collecting the ideas, hopes, and dreams that the teaching staff had. That information was used to bring the staff together around a mission statement and later around a specific restructuring agenda. Indeed, the basic framework for the changes at FHHS — the changed schedule, interdisciplinary teaching, and Advisory — were put in place by the staff during the year the new principal was hired. Change did not occur after a staff turnover or with a new staff brought in for the sake of change. It was studied, proposed, and approved by a staff that averaged 15 years of teaching experience; some of the most innovated uses of the new structures (e.g., the pairing of nutrition and keyboarding in a required freshman course), in fact, came from the more senior staff members.

Part of the reason that the staff was so willing to engage in the process of change was the professional respect it was given in the process. Release days were provided for the first time in the district for staff to engage in professional development and reflection. Funds for substitute teachers were found

so that the teaching staff (along with students and parents, see below) could make visits to other programs and not just rely on the reports of the administration. And teachers were put in charge of writing grants and handing out the funds that came with these awards.

Treating the staff professionally continued throughout the transformation of the school. As one staff member put it, "We became our own experts. Rather than sit and listen to consultants all the time, we were helped in becoming the specialists that shared information with our peers. We are professional educators with things to share with other staff members." Through the connections with professional organizations externally and through developing expertise internally, as was the case with the research-in-action teams, the teaching staff at FHHS was the most crucial resource for democratic change.

The expertise of the teaching staff is a resource accessible to any school. Creative use of professional-development monies and other resources available to any school can build a school staff ready to lead a school transformation. Finding time through early dismissals is a widely accepted practice and gives staff the arena in which to do the time-consuming work of school change. If this often-untapped resource is to be utilized in school change, it requires the recognition that teachers will be asked to go above and beyond their primary work of teaching students. To do this means providing them with the most precious resource of all: the resource of time.

The Students

More often overlooked than teachers when discussing and planning for school change are those most affected by the reforms: the students themselves. In fact, some discussions of school change seem to paint students as the enemy in the process. School is discussed as something that we have to get students to do almost against their will. School change is done in spite of students, something undertaken to make them get their work finished.

Rather than see them as outsiders in the process, FHHS utilized student expertise in developing school reform plans. Students underwent the same exercises that the staff did; they went on all visits to other sites, and they sat on the committees that proposed the most significant alterations of the school schedule and graduation requirements.

> *[The teachers] really listened to us. We are always involved, in choosing teachers and in developing new programs. After all, it is our school and our education.* – A junior-class student

As with the staff, the engagement of students continues with students now playing an important role on the school's Site-Based Committee. And students have worked to institutionalize their role by putting their right to interview teachers in their constitution.

With students, the issue seems not to be a desire to improve their schools; rather, the students need to be organized and enfranchised to play an active role in school improvement efforts. If school reform is hard for adults, it is even more so for students, who are not aware of the various pitfalls and hazards in this sort of work. On the other hand, their newness to the process means that original ideas are suggested, because students do not prejudge the success of their suggestions based on past experiences. Any school can engage students without any additional financial resources. The only thing needed is a commitment to take seriously the contribution of students and keep them involved in every step of the process.

The Parents

From the beginning, parents were involved in the process of change at FHHS. They were engaged in the same processes of inquiry about the school and were on every visit the school made to other sites. Parents were on the task force that wrote the school's Venture Capital Grant and served on all of the research-in-action teams. In recent years, the school has continued to involve parents through their attendance at all-school retreats and membership on committees such as the Graduation Standards team and the school's Site-Based Committee. Parents are the first candidates considered for employment in the school on various school grants. Most recently, the school held a series of community forums to gain parent input on curriculum, graduation standards, and school climate. Suggestions at one of these meetings led to a change in the mathematics curriculum.

FHHS has also attempted to reach out to the larger community beyond the high school. The first copy of the Graduation Standards recommendation was sent to parents of middle school as well as high school students. Excerpts from an extensive report about the changes at the high school and their results (see Appendix E), designed by two former students, was sent to all community members.

Once again, engaging parents in the process of school transformation does not require any additional resources. But it does require a commitment to democracy — a commitment that is messy at some times, and frustrating at others. In the long run, however, this is the only way to insure that change is directed by the entire school community and therefore supported by all involved.

Outside Resources

No school can be transformed totally from within. Similarly, no meaningful transformation of a school is imposed from the outside. In this case study of the building of a democratic learning community, outside resources were called upon as the learning community felt a need to utilize them.

The first resource utilized was the nearby Ohio University. Staff members who had had positive experiences with university faculty invited those faculty to make presentations to the staff. Ultimately, a partnership was built with Ohio University whereby, in exchange for providing early field and student-teaching experiences, credit hours were made available to faculty to use in school-directed courses. This meant that rather than teachers simply choosing from the list of courses the university offered, they could sign up for seminars designed to meet the needs of the school. Some of these, such as a series on cooperative learning and another on school change, were taught by university faculty. But others were taught by school faculty under the direction of OU staff. For example, when school faculty became experts with the Paideia seminars, portfolios, and team-building initiatives, they offered courses for the staff in conjunction with university teachers.

After the first year of the Venture Capital work, the school petitioned the Coalition of Essential Schools for membership. Having used the Coalition model in designing the Venture Capital Grant, it seemed only logical to pursue membership. FHHS was granted membership in 1995, only the fourth member school in Ohio and the only rural school so designated. Collaboration with the Coalition led to experts such as Joe McDonald, Jon Williams (also with the Ohio Department of Education), and Dan Hoffman visiting FHHS and providing assistance on restructuring efforts. Additionally, the staff receives "Horace," the official Coalition publication, and attends Coalition-sponsored workshops. Locally, FHHS has taken the leadership in creating a Coalition of Essential Schools center, The Essentially Appalachian Network, and has been involved in the Ohio Coalition of Essential Schools Center. Through the Coalition connection, two staff members were trained to lead Critical Friends' Groups; one such group has formed in the high school.

Perhaps the other largest effort of the staff connected with an outside agency is with the National Paideia Center at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Four staff members have gone through extensive training in the Paideia approach, and two have gone on to be nationally certified trainers. These members of the faculty have led inservice experiences for the FHHS faculty on the use of seminars at the school; this has changed teaching in the high school.

In all three cases, the service agenda was driven by the high school faculty. It selected what it felt it could learn from each agency and directed the learning around preparing internal experts. To be democratically empowered means to wean the community from reliance on outside experts to the creation of local expertise. By so doing, the community can grow in a self-directed way, rather than in response to the whims or needs of other, larger, and more bureaucratic organizations. This effort has been expanded recently with several of the staff being trained by Outward Bound and preparing to lead faculty seminars on challenge initiatives in the spring of 1999.

Leadership Resources

There is no escaping the fact that part of the catalyst for change at FHHS was the hiring of the new principal, George Wood. But rather than the centralization of leadership, the lesson of FHHS is the democratization of leadership. From the beginning, teachers took the lead on staff development, staff resources, scheduling, and school change.

> *I knew that I did not know as much as the staff did about how to make things work for our students. What I could do was provide the leadership for those good things to happen.* – George Wood

Wood identified four things that democratic leaders need to do to bring about school transformation. The first is to be keepers of the vision. More than anyone else, the principal sees the big picture of the school. Beyond one classroom or subject matter, beyond students or teachers or staff or parents, beyond curriculum or physical plant, the principal has to see it all and make it a coherent whole. According to Dennis Littky, a principal noted for his success in several schools,

> *My job is to be the keeper of the vision. To remind people how good the school can be. There has to be room for everyone to be a part of that vision and share it, but it is my job to keep it out there in front of everyone.*

The second task is to open up ways for the staff to dream about what might be. Too often, staff meetings are bogged down in trivial matters, ideas are destroyed on the shoals of state mandates, and the only thing that seems to matter is the next battery of standardized tests. To bring about democratic transformation, the principal has to create an atmosphere where it is allowable to dream, to experiment, to try, and — yes — sometimes to fail. "I told [Wood] once," a veteran teacher recounted, "that he should help us sell our ideas. I think he remembered that and tries to do it."

Third, the democratic leader has to think structurally.

> *We blame people way too much for things that do not work. Sometimes it is simply that the structures we have prevent people from doing the good work they know they can do.* – George Wood

In the case of FHHS, the first move was on the structures of time and size, structures that prevented innovation and engagement in classrooms and the personal touch a democratic community requires. Since that time, whenever something seems not to work, the first place the staff looks is to the structure of the school. "The motto is fix the big things, then the little things will fall in place," commented on staff member.

Finally, the democratic leader takes care of the small stuff so it does not become big stuff.

Most of my job is getting the obstacles out of the way. Teachers' and students' lives are busy and they are about important work. The more stuff the principal can get out of everyone's way, the easier he or she can make it for people to do their jobs, and the more likely it is that the ideas and energy that a democratic learning community needs will keep coming forward. – George Wood

Marshaling Resources

The list of resources identified above that were used by FHHS are available to any school. They do not require additional funds, but rather a reallocation of funds. One-time infusions of dollars can be effective in the process only to the extent that they support the development of school-based experts who will be there after the grant monies are gone. The most important resources are the commitment to democratic change and the belief in the possibilities inherent in the staff and students.

FHHS gets many visitors to the school. The visits are set up and conducted by students and usually end with a visit to the principal's office. After one such visit, the principal was showing several folks to the door when one of the administrators stopped and made the following observation: "We have been very impressed with your school and your program and would like to do something similar at our school. However, with the way the various regulations and tests operate, I doubt we could do anything like this in Ohio."

This one statement demonstrates perhaps the most important resource of all in bringing about a transformation of a school to a democratic learning community. The changes described herein are not found in any prepackaged or marketed program. They were developed on site, by the community members, with an eye toward student achievement. And they were guided by a vision of what the community could become and what that community would want its students to be like when they graduated. Planning backward from that goal led the school to transform itself based on the vision the school community members shared. It is that vision that is any school's most valuable resource in making a democratic transformation.

Chapter Six

The Institutionalization and Renewal of the Democratic Learning Community

Introduction

Federal Hocking High School represents a school that was transformed through democratic leadership and participation. Throughout the past eight years, many tenets of democracy have been institutionalized through the continual efforts of the faculty and administration.

Glickman (1993), an advocate of democratic schooling, provides a framework for school renewal. He believes that three dimensions support school renewal. The foundational piece is a covenant that is written by the school community. Composed of principles of learning, this covenant unites the school, providing a consistency in educational purposes. All decisions and plans must originate or coincide with the shared beliefs found in the school covenant. These principles guide actions. The second dimension, according to Glickman, is the charter for decision making that forms a constitution. For continual renewal, the school must devise a democratic process for governance, a vehicle for shared decision making. The last dimension, a critical-study process, sustains the school by providing a systematic way to study itself and make necessary changes. This framework suggests a school that has articulated a bond of belief, created a structure for democratic governance, and devised a process of school reflection. This framework describes self-renewing schools. Using Glickman's framework, this chapter will analyze these three fundamental dimensions.

A Covenant

The foundational covenant at FHHS is the school's mission statement that was written by the school community. Another important covenant for the school is the Coalition of Essential Schools' Nine Common Principles (recently revised as Ten Common Principles, in Appendix C). These two documents comprise the principles of learning that unite the school, providing cohesion in shared beliefs and principles to guide actions.

In the 1991-92 school year, the mission statement was institutionalized when the faculty voted to accept it and operate according to its principles. Providing a framework for common beliefs about teaching and learning, the mission and the common principles unified the faculty in belief, but they did not have a powerful impact until three vehicles were established to guide action of the covenant.

First, it was decided that all professional-development activities directly relate to the school mission statement or the common principles. When teachers completed the request form, they had to describe how the workshop or book connected to the common goals of the school. One teacher on the committee who approved these expenditures explained that some proposals, even though good, were not accepted because they were not clearly connected.

Second, the faculty was immersed in conversation concerning the mission and the principles. During the biweekly Friday planning meetings, aspects of the mission statement or a common principle were frequently discussed. These conversations refocused the faculty members and forced them to reflect on their work in light of their vision.

Last, faculty attempted to implement the educational philosophy embedded in its mission. The mission statement produced and guided action.

> *We're in the middle of that struggle right now in our social studies curriculum, and we're just getting to the point where it's working really well.... I feel as if now we are getting to the point where we have almost achieved the changes that we highlighted in our original mission statement.* – A Teacher

Throughout the last seven years, teachers have been creating, adjusting, and fine-tuning curricula, pedagogy, and school culture in order to realize the mission they created.

A Charter

The second dimension supporting school renewal, according to Glickman (1993), is the charter for decision making, which forms a constitution. For continual renewal, the school must devise a democratic process for governance, a vehicle for shared decision making. At FHHS, this process for democratic governance is firmly institutionalized.

> *[George] put in place, or helped put in place, the process. I believe our process [for change] is so basic. You know, just pure democratic, in its concept, and it's worked very, very well — and it's still in place. It's still the way we do things. It's one of our basic tenets. It's what I think we follow; so many good things have come out of it.* – A Teacher

When questioned concerning the process of the FHHS transformation, Wood responded:

> *I've got a one-line answer for that, and that is, "Create the structures that allow democracy to happen." We didn't have that. We didn't have the structures that would allow that, and that includes time and space for staff; it includes providing the genuine opportunities to make decisions, not just phony ones.* – George Wood

To institutionalize the democratic process, the staff focused on three issues: time and space, people, and places.

Time and Space

Before the process could begin to become institutionalized, teachers required the time and the space. These necessary elements were provided through the four-period day. After the first year operating in the four-period day, the teachers began suggesting various pedagogical and curricular changes. "The reason that happened," Wood explained, "was that people had the energy to do it. . . . In the old system, people were leaving here just exhausted." Wood believes that the shift to a four-period day permitted people time "to be a thinker, to have time to think, to have time to read, to have time to plan, to talk, to work with other people." For democratic structure to flourish, teachers had to have time and energy to participate meaningfully.

People

Next, Wood focused on providing teachers the tools of democracy while at the same time meeting their needs in a changing system. Wood described three tools of democracy that he believes were important for FHHS teachers to possess. The first tool is "to see beyond the classroom to see the whole school." Through the weekly memos and group discussions, teachers realized how their classroom fit into the context of a school focused on student learning. This realization encouraged teachers to think holistically concerning the education that their students would receive.

The second tool of democracy, according to Wood, is "to engage in debate and disagreement without being disagreeable." During faculty meetings and biweekly planning meetings, teachers were encouraged to present their opinions. At first, most faculty members would not openly contradict Wood, because they were conditioned to "accept without questioning." To encourage openness, Wood provided many opportunities for teachers to voice their opinions in small groups and on paper. Eventually, teachers began to discuss and debate issues. As Wood explains, "Put in place the processes that allow people to speak, to dissent, to be hear, to be engaged — to fight over issues that are important to them. And I support them in doing that."

The last tool is dealing with conflict. In a democratic structure, conflict always exists, but usually the conflict revolves around ideas, not between people. Wood explained that in most high schools the typical conflict emerges in the form of teachers versus principal. But at FHHS, conflict occurs over educa-

tional issues and practices. For example, at one point during the scheduling process, the mathematics department was lobbying for year-long courses. This desire resulted in conflict for the staff, not between the mathematics department and the rest of the school, but in the issues of content and priorities.

Not only did the teachers develop the tools of democracy, they also created ways to meet their individual needs inside a changing school. One flexible structure at FHHS is professional development. At the end of each year, teachers determine their current needs. Wood then attempts to provide the necessary structures to address these needs. Most of the professional development has come through in-house experts who have received extensive training.

Places

Providing time and energy for thought and investing in the people of a democracy began the process of institutionalization, but another important piece was providing the place for democracy, a place for people to be heard and to discuss. "Communication is the hallmark of a democratic learning community," Wood explains. At FHHS, four places have been institutionalized: (1) the Site-Based Steering Committee, (2) the faculty meeting, (3) the biweekly Friday planning meeting, and (4) Tuesday and "TGIF" memos. These four places are where the heart of democracy occurs.

The faculty voted to institutionalize their decision-making right through the Site-Based Committee. This committee, composed of Wood and several teachers, discusses important decisions and then forwards the conversation to faculty meetings, where final decisions are ultimately made by the entire faculty. These faculty meetings too become a place for democracy, as Wood raises issue after issue for faculty discussion and vote if consensus cannot be reached. With the right of decision making, the faculty assumes the responsibility of owning its decisions and the consequences of them, whether positive or negative.

As explored in Chapter Three, the biweekly Friday planning meeting is a key place for democracy because it represents a place for vision casting and idea exploration. During these meetings, most issues are approached through brainstorming to generate as many possibilities and to ensure that all voices are heard.

The last place for democracy resides on paper: the Tuesday and TGIF memos. These memos applaud the work of staff members throughout the building and update the faculty on individual or team projects. They unify by providing common information about the work, both professional and personal, of teachers and students. Wood quotes teachers and students, giving them credit for their ideas and extra effort. These memos, though, are often Wood's reflections on school issues, new ideas, or current problems. Through his reflections on the present, he alludes to the possibilities of the future. At FHHS, the charter or the process for democracy has been institutionalized by Wood and the faculty and is renewed on a weekly basis.

A Critical-Study Process

According to Glickman (1993), the last dimension supporting school renewal — a critical-study process, sustains the school by providing a systematic way to study itself and make necessary changes. This critical-study process has taken many forms at Federal Hocking High School. In the first year, Wood facilitated the faculty as it systematically examined the weaknesses of its school and investigated possible solutions. During the following two years, faculty members participated in action research, examining crucial issues related to the transformation that was occurring in their school. From this point on, department chairs have facilitated the work in each department to study their curriculum and revise it according to the ideals highlighted in the mission statement.

A critical-study process has been institutionalized at FHHS through the leadership of Wood. His active involvement with departments provides him the necessary information to see the school as a whole. He also studies student achievement scores, attendance, and demerits. As he studies various aspects of the school, he reflects upon them in the Tuesday and TGIF memos. After reporting and reflecting on key elements, he then facilitates faculty discussions on these issues at the biweekly Friday planning meetings. Some issues then are explored through small committees or by Wood, who then report back their findings. If a decision needs to be made concerning this issue, the Site-Based Committee makes recommendations to the faculty at a faculty meetings, and the faculty discusses the issue and comes to consensus. All the while, Wood provides pertinent information on this issue and to the faculty through his weekly memos. The critical-study process is embedded in the democratic framework.

At Federal Hocking High School, the democratic learning community articulated a bond of belief, created a structure for democratic governance, and devised a process of school reflection.

Chapter Seven

What Are the Results of Change?

Introduction

Since we began this case study by presenting the first-year experience of a Federal Hocking High School teacher from 1990, we thought it appropriate to end with the experiences of another first-year FHHS teacher from 1998. In the following vignette, she describes the situations that she encounters daily.

Vignette of a First-Year Teacher — 1998

"Don't smile until December." "Your first year of teaching, you'll be clueless. Just take it day by day." "Everything you learned in college — throw it out the window. You're going to have to start from scratch." "Oh, you're going to be a teacher? How nice . . . you'll get your summers off."

These were some of the many words of wisdom I received from people (some former educators) during my undergraduate years at Ohio University. These attitudes basically infuriated me. In my mind, being a teacher was not about forcing stoic expressions with the intention of intimidating students; it was not simply about a splendid three-month vacation; it was not about just getting by. In my mind, teaching was about making connections with growing human beings; it was about finding a window through which students could enter the explorative world of writing and literature; it was about building democratic communities and being part of a larger school community; and ultimately, it was about being a lifelong learner and developing students as lifelong learners and concerned citizens too.

Lofty expectations for a budding educator? Ignorant and naive rookie dreams? Perhaps for many first-year teachers the answer would certainly be, yes. But as a first-year teacher at Federal Hocking High School, the answer is, no, not really. Through the support system of the staff, the school's fundamental structure, the enthusiasm of students, my above-mentioned goals as an educator are attainable. So far, my first year as an English teacher at Federal Hocking High School has been very positive — I have learned and continue to learn how to be a better teacher.

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From day one, I have never felt isolated or alone with class preparations. One of the reasons for this is that teachers at Federal Hocking are paired up into interdisciplinary teams. My teaching partner/mentor immediately treated me as a professional and as an equal. A seasoned teacher of history, he had already developed extensive units and complex long-term projects that he had created with the English teacher whom I replaced. Never did he force these projects on me or imply that this is what we're going to do. Instead, he showed me former project outlines, examples of past students' work, and asked me what I liked, what I didn't like, and if I was interested in pursuing the projects. By asking for my opinion, he immediately showed me the kind of respect that runs rampant amongst the staff at Federal Hocking.

Another attribute that I can apply to my colleagues is that they enjoy what they do. The staff at Federal Hocking genuinely likes kids; the teachers at Federal Hocking know that every day is important. One of my friends who teaches English part time at the high school and who is also working towards her master's degree in education was unable to attend last month's staff meeting because she had class. That day during our third-period planning, she was telling me how disappointed she was that she couldn't make the meeting. We both agreed how much fun the meetings are and how much we enjoy the staff's humor. (Enjoying a staff meeting!?)

To illustrate this point, two days later I found myself sitting in the teachers' lounge, unable to eat my lunch because I was laughing too hard. (Red face, deep-down belly laughter.) On the other side of the wall to the teachers' lounge is the principal's office. That afternoon, Dr. Wood informed our lunch crew that during the time at lunch, he was meeting with two parents. Occasionally, he said they would glance up toward the direction of the lounge. With a hesitant yet quick cover-up, he addressed their concerned looks by saying, "Oh, those kids eating lunch." Never is there a stale day at work. Truly, I enjoy what I do.

Perhaps more important is the staff's commitment to the students and the constant desire to better the school environment. The teachers at Federal Hocking don't settle: they push, question, reflect, voice concerns, give opinions, and suggest solutions. The staff listens, even to first-year teachers like me. This year we have been implementing the school's graduation portfolio. Through both whole-group and small-group meetings, this attitude and desire for improvement is very prevalent.

The students at Federal Hocking, I think, are aware of the staff's commitment to their learning experience. Students here like their teachers and are excited to talk and share with them. A student I had last semester, who also was taking industrial technology, gave me weekly updates on an oak bench on which he had been working. The minute he received the project back, he came into my classroom right before lunch and shared it with me. Last week, when I was on hall duty, I con-

sciously took a look around at my surroundings – a student that I had in creative writing was telling me how Walt Whitman was an answer on "Jeopardy" the previous night; a science teacher in the room next to my post was aiding some freshman students who were needing help with their lab homework; a young mathematics teacher was joking with some juniors across the way. Students and teachers constantly interact at Federal Hocking. (I'm not sure if I ever realized that my high school teachers were human. In my sophomore year, I was shocked to see my chemistry teacher at the grocery store.)

Finally, there is a wonderful sense of community at Federal Hocking High School. Students and teachers are connected. In the classroom, I strive to create a learning family. This is evident in both the academic and interpersonal dynamics of the classroom. When one of my students was out in the hospital for three days, the students in that class immediately made a creative and colorful card to send to him. A student who was doing a demonstration speech on my birthday conveniently showed the class how to make a chocolate cake (it's no secret to my students that I love chocolate). In unison the students broke out into, "Happy Birthday to you ..." when the cake was completed. Another example that stands out during my first semester of teaching was when I walked into the computer lab during my planning period and came upon one of my senior creative-writing students helping one of my freshman creative-writing students with one of his poems. She told him that "it just didn't have enough imagery." It is this kind of devotion the students have towards each other that helps to create a meaningful learning experience.

To some outsiders, my accounts as a first-year teacher at Federal Hocking High School may appear to be a bit candy-coated — that in my overly optimistic mind I have perhaps created some kind of utopian workplace. However, Federal Hocking High School has provided me an ideal, warm, caring, and safe environment. And that's what it is to be part of the community there.

A Place to Belong and a Place to Grow

The school that this teacher describes is quite a different place from the school described in 1990. Though the building has had cosmetic changes, the most important changes have taken place inside the walls of the high school. A teacher who taught at FHHS for seven years and was part of the case study team was able to participate in these changes. She reaped the results that all the teachers and students alike experienced — having a place to belong and a place to grow.

The community that has emerged at the high school, resulting from the transformation, provides teachers and students a place to belong. Teachers belong to a staff that is committed to the realization of its vision. They also belong to teaching teams in which they discuss the heart of education: teaching and learning. These teams provided support and encouragement. Because of the changes, students too find their places of belonging during the long lunch hour. Each student has a chosen place where he or she spends lunch, either playing with friends or studying with a teacher. Students also find that they belong in classes because teachers have the time to build relationships and to create a sense of classroom community.

Not only do teachers and students have a place to belong in the FHHS community, they also have a place to grow. Teachers remain in a state of change as they continually examine and reevaluate their curriculum and instructional strategies as they relate to the school mission. Reflective dialogue and deprivatization of practice provide opportunities for teaching teams to push one another professionally. As teachers become in-house experts, they are challenged to model, instruct, and support other teachers in the area of their expertise. Teachers are leaders, and the leadership positions that they assume force them to grow and learn.

The transformation has also provided students opportunities to grow as learners, citizens, and human beings. Students now must exhibit their knowledge and skill through classroom exhibitions and portfolios; they must demonstrate their competencies through the production of their graduation portfolio. Students also participate freely in creating the kind of school that they want through their student constitution and student delegation. They have a voice and can make a difference. Also of great importance, students have a place to grow as human beings — to explore, to make decisions, to solve problems, to be resourceful, and to have compassion. They belong to a community that cares for them and for which they care. Federal Hocking High School is a democratic learning community, and the transformation that occurred there has created a nurturing, yet challenging environment for teachers and students.

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APPENDIX A
METHODOLOGY

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), in qualitative research the researcher frequently gains data through observation, with varying levels of participation. On a participant-observation continuum, several significant points emerge describing the researcher's role. On the far left of the continuum, a researcher remains solely an observer. At the next point on the continuum, the researcher becomes an "observer as participant." In this role, the researcher relies heavily on observation with little interaction with the participants. Similar in design is the next stop on the continuum, the "participant as observer." In this role, the outside researcher becomes a participant, observing and joining action. On the far right of this continuum is the full participant researcher who is "simultaneously a functioning member of the community undergoing investigation and an investigator" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 40). Such complete involvement is beneficial, because a qualitative researcher desires to become part of what he or she seeks to understand. Because both main researchers have or have had an affiliation with the school, we took on this role of full participant-observer.

In writing this case study, we drew upon several different sources, including raw data in the form of artifacts and interviews. Document sources were George Wood's book, *A Time to Learn: The Story of One High School's Remarkable Transformation and the People Who Made it Happen (1998)*, and Susan Murray's dissertation, *Cooperative Professional Development: A Narrative of Teacher and School Renewal (1997)*. Both sources focus on the transformation at Federal Hocking High School. Data were also extracted from Wood's personal journals and a multitude of FHHS artifacts such as school memos and scheduling charts.

Providing rich description and provoking ideas, several teachers from Federal Hocking High School provided personal narratives of their experiences at the school. Transcribed interviews from Catherine Glascock also provided a source of data, and Stephen Anderson and Dennis Thiessen conducted focus group sessions, after which the transcriptions were carefully examined.

APPENDIX B
TIMELINE OF CHANGE

1991-92	Fall	Three teachers take over discipline system responsibilities from Principal
	Summer	Three staff members experiment with interdisciplinary block-schedule planning using 90 freshmen
1992-93	August	Dr. George Wood hired as Principal
	September	Wood begins one-on-one meetings with all faculty members
	November	Monthly staff-development meetings begin Parent and student meetings begin
	December	Two themes — time and size — identified as problems in parent, student and faculty meetings
	January	New school mission statement adopted
	March	Students, parents, faculty reach agreement on major structural changes: four-period block schedule, two 18-week semesters, institute an Advisory program to replace homeroom
	May	Student group petitions School Board to block new schedule and changes
1993-94	September	Work begins on Venture Capital Grant Proposal by senior faculty, students, parents and administration
	October	Coalition of Essential Schools model adopted
	January	Venture Capital Grant awarded
	March	Eight research-in-action teams formed
	April	"Owl Committee" (Opening Windows to Learning) formed to administer and budget Venture Capital funds, articles and information disseminated through "The Hoot" Internship Program explored with two students
	May	Students and staff brought into new hiring decisions Research-in-action teams report to the School Board on their work End-of-year faculty cook-out held, research-in-action teams meet and plan summer work

	Summer	Martha Holden Jennings Foundation provides grant for Internship Program
		Internship Coordinator hired
1994-95	September	Research-in-action teams hold "Hootenanny" meetings for planning year
		Faculty Library established with Venture Capital Funds
		Humanities courses (English and Social Studies) double-blocking begins
		Portfolio approach in all English classes begins
	November	Application to Coalition of Essential Schools
		Sixteen staff members and two students attend Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum in Chicago
	December	Research-in-action teams begin report presentations at monthly faculty meeting
	March	All-school "advance" held at Salt Fork State Park — Topic: Graduation Standards
		FHHS granted membership in the Coalition of Essential Schools
	April	New research-in-action teams formed: Graduation by Exhibition, Curriculum, School Atmosphere, Advisory Program
1995-96	September	Susan Murray hired as Staff Development Coordinator
		Full-time internship coordinator hired
		Student Council assumes responsibility for approving club meetings, fund raisers, writing a new student handbook, selecting student interview teams
	November	Fifteen staff members and one parent attend Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum in New York City
	December	Graduation Standards team and faculty work on new standards over the next few months
	April	Graduation standards report drafted and sent to all parents
	May	Graduation standards presented to the school board. Board tables recommendations; hostility and concern voiced by the community at community meetings held to discuss the new standards
	Summer	Graduation Standards team reworks proposal
		FHHS seeks North Central Association accreditation

1996-97	September	School Board approves new graduation credits requirement only
		Susan Murray begins individualized monthly staff-development meetings with teachers during planning periods
	December	Students begin work on new Student Constitution
	March	District rocked by School Board's decision not to renew Dr. Wood's contract
		Student walk-outs, sit-ins and protests
		Staff votes to adopt site-based management system
	April	Student body approves new Student Constitution 3:1
	May	School Board rejects Student Constitution
		School Board reverses decision and rehires Dr. Wood with two-year contract
	Summer	High school remodeling takes place during the summer; new middle school completed
1997-98	September	North Central Association grants accreditation
		Board approves Student Constitution
		Student-implemented "Peer Mediation" system instituted
		Critical Friends Group established by teachers
		Team of staff members investigate "Outward Bound" approach
	March	School "Advance" held at Burr Oak State Park
		Graduation Standards team re-formed, and work on standards continues
	April	Community forums held to explain new programs and requirements to community
		"Expeditionary Learning" themes across grade levels approved and activities decided upon
	May	First annual "Lancer Games" take place
	July	A team of 12 students and five staff meet to explore expeditionary learning concepts for one week
	August	School Board approves Graduation Standards
		Staff attends two-day workshop to learn implementation of Expeditionary Learning Initiatives for Advisories

1998-99	September	Whole-class Expeditionary Learning Activities begin in each grade Graduation portfolio development begins in Advisory Newly structured Student Government phase-in begins
	November	Freshmen Curriculum Team established to review and possibly make recommendations concerning freshmen curriculum

APPENDIX C

COALITION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS' COMMON PRINCIPLES

1. The school should focus on helping adolescents learn to use their minds well. Schools should not attempt to be "comprehensive" if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose.

2. The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that students need, rather than necessarily by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "less is more" should dominate: curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement, rather than by an effort merely to cover content.

3. The schools goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents.

4. Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than 80 students. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time, and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.

5. The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker rather than the more familiar metaphor of teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.

6. Students entering secondary school studies are those who can show competence in language and elementary mathematics. Students of traditional high school age, but not yet at appropriate levels of competence to enter secondary school studies, will be provided intensive remedial work to assist them to quickly meet these standards. The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation — an "Exhibition." This exhibition by the student of his or her grasp of the central skills and knowledge of the school's program may be jointly administered by the faculty and by higher authorities. As the diploma is awarded when earned, the

school's program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of "credits earned" by "time spent" in class. The emphasis is on the students' demonstration that they can do important things.

7. The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused), and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity, and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized, and parents should be treated as essential collaborators.

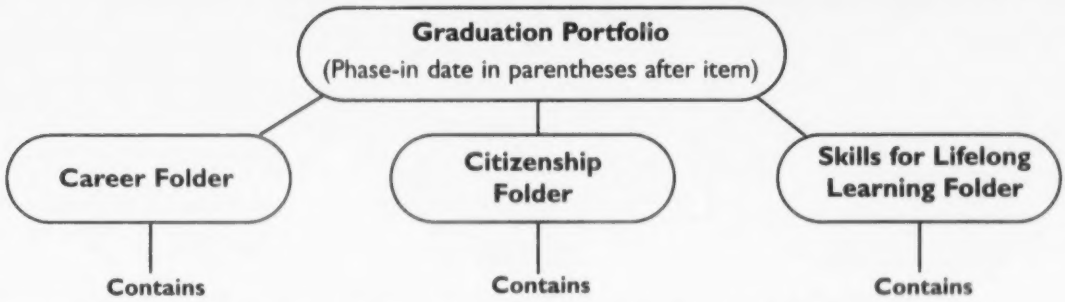
8. The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in but one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and a sense of commitment to the entire school.

9. Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total student loads per teacher of 80 or fewer pupils, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff, and an ultimate per-pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than ten percent. To accomplish this, administrative plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided students in many traditional comprehensive secondary schools.

10. The school should demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. The school should honor diversity and build on the strengths of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity.

APPENDIX D

GRADUATION PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS



Contains

School profile (Completed by Staff)
Letter of Verification (Completed by Staff)
Resume (2000)
Transcripts (1999)
Career plan (2000)
- Career Investigation
- Essay of Future Goals
- College Continuing Education Project
- Self Reflection paper

Letters of recommendation (1999)
Activities (1999)
Scholarships & Awards (1999)
Out-of-school experiences (2000)
- Internships
- College Course Work
- Community Service or project

Examples:
- River Clean-up
- Scouting activities
- Volunteer activities

Contains

At least 3 demonstrations of active participation in the political process (2000)
Demonstrations can include:
- Participation in student government
- Composition of letters to the editor
- Attendance at public meetings
- Proof of voter registration
- Active participation in political campaigns

A media awareness project or paper (2001)
Demonstrates students' ability to identify how the media influence public opinion
A government & rights project or paper (2000)
Demonstrates students' understanding of how various forms of government work and current constitutional rights & responsibilities
A local history project (2001)
Demonstrates students' understanding of how historical events influence the present, & students' knowledge of the history of the area
A geography & culture project (2000)
Demonstrates students' understanding of the impact culture and geography have on global events
A position paper & supporting speech (1999)
Demonstrates a student's ability to discuss differing points of view in an objective & respectful manner and the ability to analyze a political issue through research

Contains

Academic skills
Senior research paper (1999)
Senior project (2000)
- Written component
- Project proposal
- Background paper
- Action component
- Carrying out project
- Presenting project

Academic showcase (1999)
Best work or project in 3 of the following academic areas:

Mathematics	Music
Art	Science
Industrial Tech	Agriculture
Foreign Lang.	English
Work & Fam. Life	

Personal skills
Demonstration of financial skills (2000)
Wellness plan (2002)
Demonstration of personal problem-solving skills (2000)
Parenting essay (2000)
Conflict-resolution skills (optional)

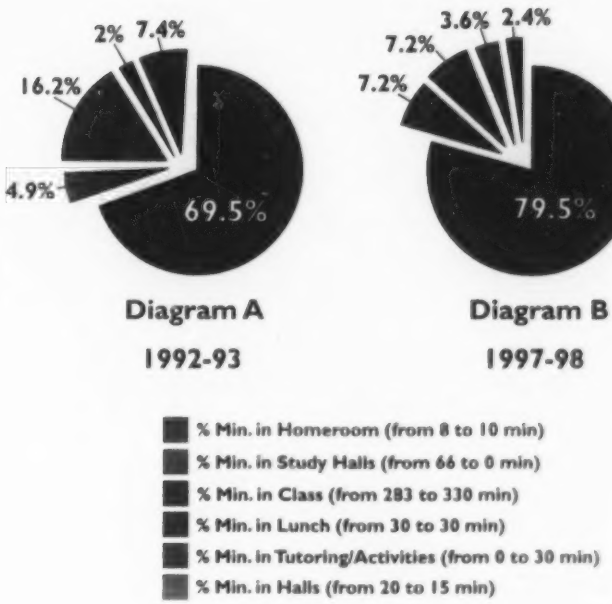
APPENDIX E

EXCERPTS FROM CHANGE AT FEDERAL HOCKING HIGH SCHOOL: A REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY (1998)

Overall Distribution of Time

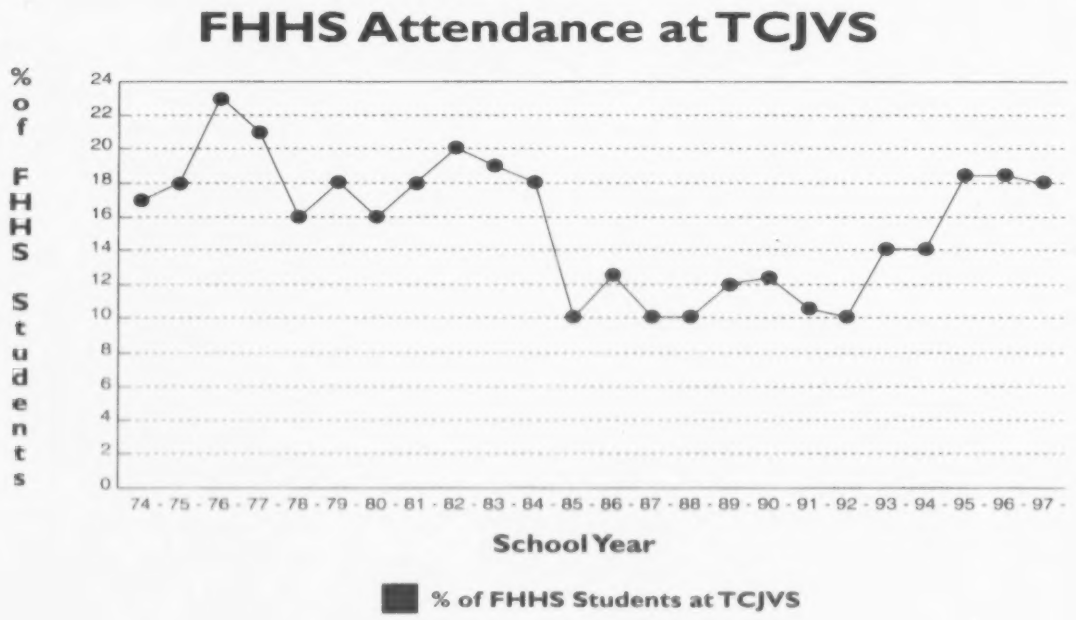
The following diagrams show the differences between the eight-period day (displayed in Diagram A) versus the four-period day (displayed in Diagram B) and how a student's time was divided both before and after the schedule change.

Changes in Time Distribution For FHHS Students



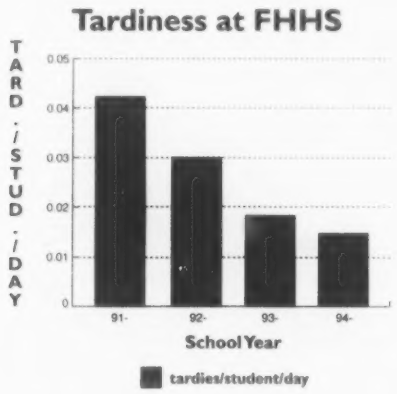
Vocational School Enrollment Data

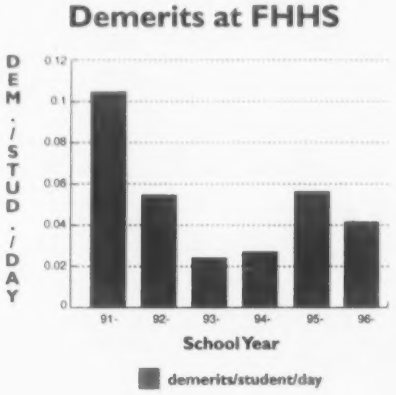
During the spring of their sophomore year, FHHS students may choose to attend Tri-County Joint Vocational School. The vocational school offers a number of programs, including carpentry, cosmetology, auto body, office practices and health careers. The high-quality programs offered at TCJVS are well funded and offer students the vocational-training opportunities unavailable at FHHS. The graph below shows how FHHS's vocational enrollment has varied since 1974. Current enrollment levels of FHHS students at TCJVS are not out of line with historic levels.



Discipline Data

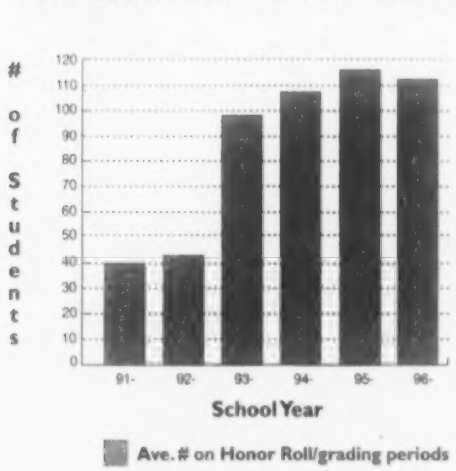
Students who fail to obey the rules at FHHS are given demerits. Students earning 10 demerits are given an after-school detention. Likewise, tardiness can lead to after-school detentions or lunch detentions. Due to the varying population of students at FHHS and the varying length of the school year, the discipline data below is represented as demerits/student/day and tardies/student day. Tardy data are not available for the 1995 or 1996 school year.

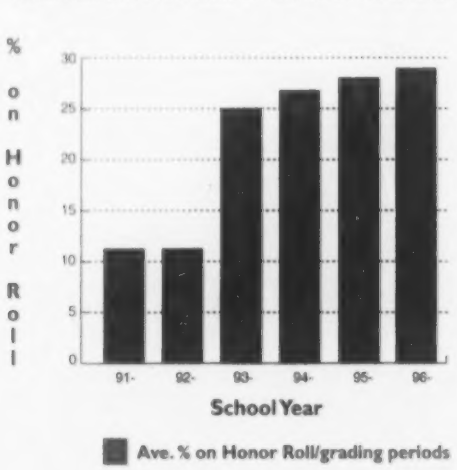




Academic Data

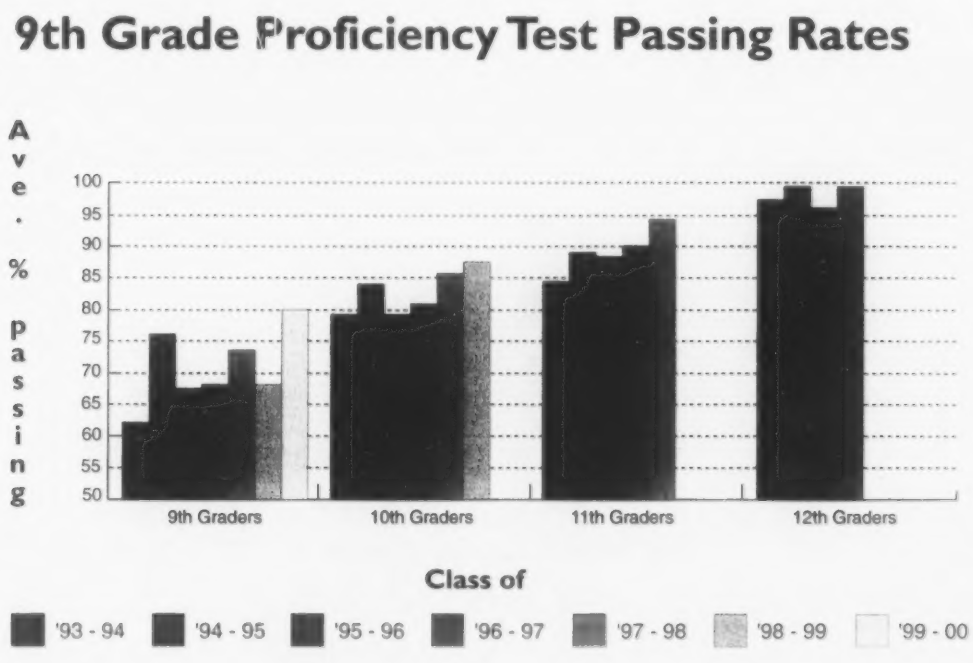
One of the ways in which academics is measured at the high school is by Honor Roll. Students must have all A's and B's to qualify for the Honor Roll. Both the number and percentage of students on the Honor Roll at FHHS has increased since 1991-92 school year.





Standardized Test Score Data

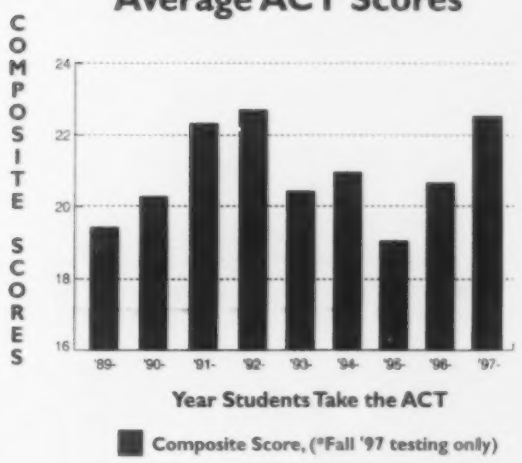
A second way in which academics can be measured is by the use of standardized test scores. The two most important standardized tests FHHS students take are Ohio's Ninth-Grade Proficiency test, and the American College Test or ACT. Students must pass the proficiency test in order to graduate. Through the years, proficiency test scores have improved.



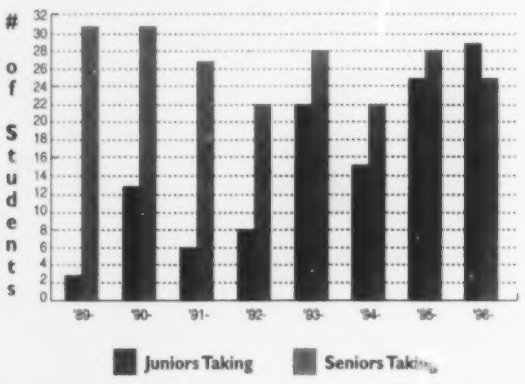
Standardized Test Score Data (cont.)

The American College Test is taken by students seeking admission to college and scholarship consideration. The following graphs show average composite scores and the number and grade of students taking the test.

Average ACT Scores



Number and Grade of Students Taking the ACT at FHHS



Accomplishments

The following are awards and grants received by FHHS in response to the changes that have come about over the past five years. We thank all the parents, students, community members, and staff that have made these honors possible.

Grants Received

- Venture Capital Grant, State of Ohio (1993) — $125,000 for staff development
- Venture Partner Schools Grant, State of Ohio (1996) — $5,000 for video equipment
- Jennings Foundation Grant (1993) — $28,000 to start internship program
- Jennings Foundation Grant (1995) — $56,000 to study Graduation Standards
- School to Work Grant, State of Ohio — $63,000 to expand internship program and begin Career Passports
- Toshiba Foundation Grant — $7,500 for Graphing Calculators and Physics Equipment

Awards and Honors

- Coalition of Essential Schools, Membership Received (1995)
- Transforming Learning Communities Award, State of Ohio (1997)
- Getting the Job Done Award, State of Ohio (1997)

TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES SITES

FEDERAL HOCKING HIGH SCHOOL
Federal Hocking Local Schools (Athens County)
Ohio University

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

1 **Brentmoor Elementary School**
Mentor Exempted Village Schools
Cleveland State University

2 **Cranwood Learning Academy**
Cleveland City Schools
Cleveland State University

3 **Dawson-Bryant Elementary School**
Dawson-Bryant Local Schools
(Lawrence County)
Ohio University

4 **Lomond Elementary School**
Shaker Heights City Schools
Cleveland State University

5 **Miami East North Elementary School**
Miami East Local Schools
(Miami County)
Miami University

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

6 **East Muskingum Middle School**
East Muskingum Local Schools
(Muskingum County)
Muskingum College
Ohio University

7 **Galion Middle School**
Galion City Schools
The Ohio State University

8 **Talawanda Middle School**
Talawanda City Schools
Miami University

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

9 **Federal Hocking High School**
Federal Hocking Local Schools
(Athens County)
Ohio University

10 **Franklin Heights High School**
South-Western City Schools
The Ohio State University

11 **Reynoldsburg High School**
Reynoldsburg City Schools
The Ohio State University

12 **Robert A. Taft High School**
Cincinnati City Schools
Miami University

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